

Weekend

Moslems in Britain seek a place in the country

Bespoke tailoring within your grasp

Page I Page XI

FINANCIAL TIMES

FEBRUARY 13 / FEBRUARY 14 1999

Weekend

Forget about business: the Chinese are feasting

Admitted: the serial househunters

Page XII

PRESIDENT APOLOGISES AGAIN TO AMERICAN PEOPLE AFTER NOT-GUILTY VERDICT IN SENATE IMPEACHMENT TRIAL

# Clinton calls for reconciliation after acquittal

By Gerard Baker in Washington

The final act of the impeachment drama that has convulsed American politics for the past 18 months drew to a close yesterday with a further apology from President Bill Clinton. Acquitted by the Senate of charges that he lied under oath and obstructed justice, he called for "a time of reconciliation and renewal for America".

In a brief address to the nation from the rose garden of the White House, Mr Clinton apologised for "all he said and did to trigger these events and the great burden they have imposed on the Congress and the American people".

Senators failed by a wide margin to record the two-thirds majority on either

count needed to convict and remove him from office, thanks to a group of Republican defectors.

Shortly after noon, William Rehnquist, chief justice of the Supreme Court, called out the question: "Senators, how say you? Is respondent William Jefferson Clinton guilty or not guilty?" One by one, the 100 senators delivered their verdict. They rejected by 55 to 45 the first article of impeachment alleging perjury before a grand jury by Mr Clinton in the Monica Lewinsky case, with 10 Republicans voting not guilty.

The vote on the second article, that Mr Clinton obstructed justice, was split 50-50, as just five Republicans broke with their party.

That vote denied the Republican prosecutors from

the House of Representatives even the consolation prize of securing a majority vote to convict. Neither article came close to achieving the 67 votes needed to obtain a conviction, as none of the 45 Democrats voted guilty.

After the votes, the atmosphere on Capitol Hill changed quickly from somberness to a high-spirited sense of intense relief that the long process was over at last, in time, appropriately for the Presidents' Day holiday weekend.

"All Americans can take great comfort," said Henry Hyde, the chairman of the House Judiciary committee, who led the prosecution of Mr Clinton. "Congress has strengthened, not weakened, the ties that bind our nation together."

Tom Harkin, one of the



President Clinton apologised for "all he said and did to trigger these events"

most vocal Democrat critics of the charges brought by the House of Representatives against Mr Clinton, warmly slapped Mr Hyde's back and Mr Hyde himself shook hands with David Kendall, one of Mr Clinton's lawyers.

"We've been through this, we've done what was required and we ought to

move on," said Trent Lott, the Republican leader in the Senate, who voted guilty on both counts.

Mr Rehnquist, who presided over the five-week Senate trial, took his leave of senators with warm praise for the process.

However, the Lewinsky affair redrew the boundaries

of American political and judicial life, opened the presidency to unprecedented scrutiny, resulted in the first impeachment trial of a president in 181 years, but left Americans unmoved.

The Starr report, Page 3  
The first lady slaps, Page 6  
Lax, Page 24

# Anti-Yeltsin group urges tough line by Primakov

By John Thornhill in Moscow

Yevgeny Primakov, Russia's prime minister, is heading for a showdown with President Boris Yeltsin over who controls Moscow's levers of power.

An influential group within Moscow's political elite close to Mr Primakov is pressing for the sacking of Mr Yeltsin to step down to prepare the way for presidential elections. The Council of Foreign and Defence Policy

will today urge Mr Primakov to take radical action to restore the legitimacy of the federal government and halt the economic crisis.

Sergei Karaganov, the council's chairman, said the council meeting would discuss a report that calls for the voluntary resignation of Mr Yeltsin, fresh presidential elections, limited constitutional change, and the development of a long-term economic strategy.

"We insist on Yeltsin

resigning. That is the only way out of this crisis," Mr Karaganov said in an interview with the Financial Times. "Primakov will be persuaded to run by the vast majority of people and he will win."

The council's discussion document, which has been prepared by several of its 150 members but has not been approved by them all, highlights the alarm in Moscow about the escalating political tensions between the president and the prime minister.

Mr Karaganov, who has known Prime Minister Primakov for 25 years but has no formal connection with him, said Russia was facing a graver threat than in 1991, when hardline Communists launched a push, or in 1993, when Mr Yeltsin ordered the shelling of the Supreme Soviet.

"The whole debate is not about economic policies. It is about survival. There is a very high probability that

the country will fall apart in a couple of years," he said.

Mr Yeltsin, who has recently been sidelined by a recurrence of ill health, appears to have grown increasingly irritated at Mr Primakov's attempts to grab the political limelight by negotiating a "stability pact" with parliament.

Rumours have been circulating this week that Mr Yeltsin intends to sack several prominent ministers, including possibly Mr Prima-

kov. But such moves would probably put the president into a renewed confrontation with parliament.

Mr Karaganov, a high profile political analyst, said such continued uncertainties were hampering Russia's efforts to find a way out of its crisis. "Unfortunately it is very hard to predict things at the moment because of the total unpredictability of the president," he said.

Report savages Yeltsin, Page 2

News General

## Lafontaine warns ECB on growth

Germany's finance ministry has warned that if the European Central Bank fails to react to deteriorating economic conditions, Europe's governments may have to use fiscal policy alternatives. The tersely-worded report highlights tensions between German finance minister Oskar Lafontaine and the Frankfurt-based ECB. Page 2

## Bank of Japan eases short-term rates

The Bank of Japan yesterday bowed to growing political pressure to ease monetary policy by guiding short-term interest rates lower. But BoJ said demands that it should curb rising rates by purchasing Japanese government bonds "lacked common sense". Page 4

## Albright will try to break Kosovo stalemate

US secretary of state Madeleine Albright is to make a personal attempt to break the impasse at the Kosovo peace talks in France, which western mediators blame on Serbian negotiators. Page 2

## UK rules out ban on genetically-modified food

The British government yesterday rejected renewed calls for a moratorium on genetically-modified foods. Prime minister Tony Blair said the government was following the best scientific advice and that public concerns were unjustified. Page 5; Lax, Page 24

Pill of the century

## Aspirin's first 100 years - the versatile painkiller that will not give up

Page 7

News Business

## Pirelli links with Cooper Tire

Pirelli, the Italian tyre and cables group, and Cooper Tire and Rubber of the US have established a strategic alliance for their businesses in North and South America. The move comes a week after Goodyear Tire & Rubber of the US and Sumitomo Rubber of Japan launched joint ventures. Page 24

## Solid growth from Viag and Alusuisse Lonza

Viag, the German industrial group, and Alusuisse Lonza of Switzerland yesterday both unveiled solid growth in pre-tax profits, which they said created good conditions for their planned merger. Munich-based Viag saw 1998 pre-tax operating profits rise 10 per cent to DM8.2bn (£1.64bn, \$1.85bn) in 1998, while Alusuisse reported a 14.5 per cent increase in net earnings to SF530m (\$374.5m). Page 23

## European stock markets stage a late retreat

European stock markets pulled back from their best levels late in the day as Wall Street opened weak after the Dow's strong overnight performance. In the telecom sector robust results were announced by British Telecommunications. Deutsche Telekom sharply outperformed the Frankfurt bourse while France Telecom closed flat in a sinking Paris market. Currencies, Page 9; Bonds, Page 14; London Stocks, Page 17; World Stocks, Pages 20-21; FT Weekend Pages XX-XXI

## Bad debts hit Dai-ichi Kangyo Bank

Dai-ichi Kangyo Bank, one of Japan's large city banks, says its losses from bad debts in the year to March will surge to ¥970bn (\$9.5bn), resulting in a parent pre-tax loss of ¥630bn instead of a previously forecast profit of ¥50bn. Page 24

## Cleared for take-off but not for landing

Deregulation of the European and US airline industries means it has never been so cheap to fly. Passenger numbers are expected to rise 5 per cent annually over the next 20 years. There is just one problem. Where will all these aircraft land? Page 7

## World class performance from global privatisations.

+110% since May 1994

GLOBAL PRIVATISATION FUND

Privatisations - The Facts

- Since 1991, privatisation stocks as a whole have outperformed the MSCI World ex-US Index, reflecting the efficiency and profitability gains which shareholder pressure induces.
- We believe that over US\$350bn of privatisation assets are likely to come to the market over the next 10 years.
- Privatised companies often exceed investor profit expectations as a result of private sector forces.

The Global Privatisation Fund - The Facts

- Investec Guinness Flight pioneered the concept of privatisation funds with the launch of the first global privatisation UK unit trust and offshore fund and has its own proprietary privatisation index.
- Our Global Privatisation Fund is one of the best performing offshore global equity funds, having risen by 110% since its launch in May 1994.
- The Fund is well diversified, with a current emphasis on Europe, which has the largest planned privatisation programme.

Call us now or complete and return the coupon.

Investec Guinness Flight Fund Managers (Channel Islands) Limited, Guinness Flight House, PO Box 250, St Peter Port, Guernsey GY2 2PH, Channel Islands. Tel: +44 (0) 1462 712155. Please send me more details of the Global Privatisation Fund.

Title \_\_\_\_\_ Initials \_\_\_\_\_ Surname \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Country \_\_\_\_\_

INVESTEC GUINNESS FLIGHT

+44(0)1481 712 176 Ref 4423

FT.com: the FT web site provides updated news and an online archive of back articles at <http://www.ft.com>

## Contents

News	International News	2-4
UK News	5	
Weather	6	
FT.com	7	
FT.com	8	
FT.com	9	
FT.com	10	
FT.com	11	
FT.com	12	
FT.com	13	
FT.com	14	
FT.com	15	
FT.com	16	
FT.com	17	
FT.com	18	
FT.com	19	
FT.com	20	
FT.com	21	
FT.com	22	
FT.com	23	
FT.com	24	
FT.com	25	
FT.com	26	
FT.com	27	
FT.com	28	
FT.com	29	
FT.com	30	
FT.com	31	
FT.com	32	
FT.com	33	
FT.com	34	
FT.com	35	
FT.com	36	
FT.com	37	
FT.com	38	
FT.com	39	
FT.com	40	
FT.com	41	
FT.com	42	
FT.com	43	
FT.com	44	
FT.com	45	
FT.com	46	
FT.com	47	
FT.com	48	
FT.com	49	
FT.com	50	
FT.com	51	
FT.com	52	
FT.com	53	
FT.com	54	
FT.com	55	
FT.com	56	
FT.com	57	
FT.com	58	
FT.com	59	
FT.com	60	
FT.com	61	
FT.com	62	
FT.com	63	
FT.com	64	
FT.com	65	
FT.com	66	
FT.com	67	
FT.com	68	
FT.com	69	
FT.com	70	
FT.com	71	
FT.com	72	
FT.com	73	
FT.com	74	
FT.com	75	
FT.com	76	
FT.com	77	
FT.com	78	
FT.com	79	
FT.com	80	
FT.com	81	
FT.com	82	
FT.com	83	
FT.com	84	
FT.com	85	
FT.com	86	
FT.com	87	
FT.com	88	
FT.com	89	
FT.com	90	
FT.com	91	
FT.com	92	
FT.com	93	
FT.com	94	
FT.com	95	
FT.com	96	
FT.com	97	
FT.com	98	
FT.com	99	
FT.com	100	



## WORLD NEWS

## UK, Spain agree Gibraltar peace talks

By David White in Madrid and David Buchanan in London

Abel Matutes, Spain's normally affable foreign minister, tried yesterday to extricate himself from a confrontation with the UK over Gibraltar, which left him stranded like the famous apes on the side of the colonial rock.

Under criticism from domestic quarters almost as much as from the touchy Gibraltarians, Mr Matutes had lost the customary support of opposition politicians over his handling of the latest crisis and was being badgered by local leaders on the Spanish side of the frontier.

After a war of words and frayed tempers at the frontier over the last two weeks, plans were announced yesterday for talks between Mr Matutes and Robin Cook, his UK counterpart, during an informal European Union meeting in Brussels a week on Sunday.

In a 90-minute telephone conversation on Thursday night, they agreed to let matters calm down and avoid grand declarations or gestures until their meeting, according to Spanish and UK officials.

The UK Foreign Office yesterday took "encouragement" from Mr Matutes's assurance to Mr Cook that

Spain would not carry out its threat to ban overflights to the Rock and to refuse to recognise Gibraltarian driving licences. UK officials also said Spanish customs had halved delays at the border to an average three hours yesterday, but they complained this was still unacceptable.

The peace bid follows complaints to Brussels from both sides. Britain protested about Spanish threats to step up pressure on the Gibraltarians, already exacerbated by border delays. Spain protested about Britain's lag in ensuring that Gibraltar complied with EU rules.

Last week, Mr Matutes, a veteran of the European Commission, said he had nothing to talk about with London except the recovery of sovereignty over Gibraltar, signed over to Britain 286 years ago.

But officials said he and Mr Cook had gone into the "fine print" of the latest tensions. This included Spain's argument about Gibraltar's driving licences, which Mr Matutes this week threatened not to recognise.

Mr Cook said yesterday that the "very good relationship" between Spain and Britain had to be based on "a clear understanding that the interests, and consent, of

the people of Gibraltar are paramount". The UK foreign secretary came under domestic pressure yesterday from the Conservative opposition to reject the proposals on Gibraltar sovereignty that Spain made in 1987. Mr Cook retorted that, under the terms of a dialogue that a Conservative government started in 1984 with Madrid, the UK could not refuse to discuss such proposals, although it could and would oppose them.

Spain is awaiting Britain's reply to its plan for giving Gibraltar a similar status to Spain's self-governing regions, with an interim "trial period" of joint British-Spanish sovereignty. Spanish ministers believe Britain will eventually balk at the political cost of the Gibraltar dispute, and the economic cost of keeping the colony of 30,000 inhabitants going, if Spain obstructs the development of its financial services and tourism sectors.

However, Britain is formally committed not to hand over sovereignty without the Gibraltarians' "freely and democratically expressed" consent. And the last two weeks' furore has set back whatever faint chance there might have been of obtaining it.

## Report savages Yeltsin presidency

By John Thornhill in Moscow

Sir Winston Churchill once famously compared Russian politics to a dogfight under a carpet. It was only when one dog killed the other that you knew which was the stronger.

Just such a skirmish appears to have broken out between the ailing Boris Yeltsin, president, and Yevgeny Primakov, his increasingly ambitious prime minister. Some observers suggest that - for the first time in his eight-year presidency - Mr Yeltsin may not emerge as top dog.

When the wily, 69-year-old prime minister attends a meeting of the Council on Defence and Foreign Policy today, he will be presented with a document containing a withering critique of Mr Yeltsin's presidency, an alarming assessment of Russia's prospects, and a scathing veiled call for action.

"To wait for elections in 2000 will be extremely dangerous," the report concludes. "The optimal solution for the country would be the resignation of Yeltsin (on health grounds) and the announcement of pre-term presidential elections."

The council, which groups

Some observers suggest that for the first time in his eight-year presidency, Mr Yeltsin may not emerge as top dog

together 150 leading politicians, businessmen, and journalists, can hardly be considered a hotbed of revolutionaries. But its members believe the country faces a dire peril unless it can break out of its current impasse. The report presents Mr Primakov as the country's best hope for consoli-

dating all right-minded political forces and guaranteeing Russia's survival - in spite of the prime minister's repeated claims that he will contest the presidency.

The paper, entitled *About an Exit from the Crisis*, predicts the country's deteriorating economy will impose enormous strains on Rus-

ted base of social support," it says. The threat of extremist action will grow ever stronger by the day.

In the words of Sergei Karaganov, the council's chairman, most of the "magic glue" holding Russia together are already fast dissolving. The chronic underfunding of federal institutions, including the police, the military and the security services, has left them dependent on the local rather than central authorities. Most of the country's banks and financial-industrial groups, which used to bind the country together economically, are now bankrupt. Tough budget policies are reducing the scope for regional aid. If present trends continue until the year 2000, Mr Karaganov predicts, Russia may disintegrate as a country and simply become a "shape on a map". "Either there will be a breakdown of central author-

ity or a restoration of power by means of very brutal force," Mr Karaganov says.

The council's report argues that Russia's liberals, who have sporadically supported Mr Yeltsin and are opposed to early presidential elections, are deluding themselves if they believe they would benefit from economic collapse and the discrediting of Mr Primakov's government. "Historical experience shows that a prolonged worsening of the position of the middle class creates fertile soil not for a liberal restoration but for fascism," the report suggests.

The chief obstacle to Mr Karaganov's "optimal" outcome for Russia is that Mr Yeltsin has made clear he will not relinquish power before the end of his term. And Mr Primakov, a cautious politician, seems certain to distance himself from the council's conclusions - in public at least.

## Germany warns ECB on slowdown

By Ralph Atkins in Bonn

Germany's finance ministry has warned that if the European Central Bank fails to react to deteriorating economic conditions, Europe's governments may have to react with fiscal policy alternatives. Doing nothing "could turn out to be extremely expensive", it argues.

In a report sent to the 10 other governments in the euro-zone, the ministry says "the point has now been reached" where action is required to counter the clear threat of a prolonged economic slowdown.

"Playing a waiting game is an exceptionally hazardous strategy, not least in view of global instabilities." It attacks an apparently complacent stance by the European Commission towards the global economic climate.

The tersely worded report highlights the tension between Oskar Lafontaine, finance minister, and the Frankfurt-based ECB, which, Mr Lafontaine argues, has to take an active role in boosting economic growth. He sees scope for further cuts in Europe's interest rates.

The report says that if monetary policy-makers fail to find answers to falling global demand, other options must be considered.

"This is not a desirable situation. Monetary policy is certainly the preferred instrument to respond to this shock. If it is not used, fiscal measures cannot be ruled out," it said.

Last night, the finance ministry said it had no concrete proposals for possible fiscal responses. Its report makes a point of dismissing as "groundless" fears that government deficits led quickly to a rise in long-term interest rates. Yesterday, Mr Lafontaine denied German media suggestions he envisaged billion-euro spending programmes.

In practice, Bonn is committed to Europe's "stability and growth pact", which sets fiscal rules for euro currency members. Earlier this year, Mr Lafontaine pledged Germany would cut its public sector deficit from 2.5 per cent of national income last year to 1 per cent in 2002. "Fiscal measures" could also include greater use of tax incentives or "giveaways", finance ministry officials said.

Chancellor Gerhard Schröder yesterday urged employers and workers in the metal and electrical industry to avert a strike, which he fears could harm German prospects for economic growth and destroy his plans for cutting unemployment, writes Tony Barber in Frankfurt.

"As chancellor of Germany, I cannot accept that a labour conflict should take place in the country's most important industrial sector, especially as future economic developments fill me with increasing concern," he said in a letter addressed to Werner Stumpf, the employers' leader, and Klaus Zwickel, head of the IG Metall trade union.

IG Metall's national leadership meets in Frankfurt tomorrow and is expected to order a strike ballot among its 2.7m members on February 22-24. If backed by 75 per cent of members, a strike could start as early as March 1. Mr Schröder is anxious that the dispute should not upset his Alliance for Jobs initiative, which seeks to unite government, employers and unions around a common programme to create jobs.

## Political football is the name of the game in Hungary

A ministerial fight over control of the country's soccer clubs is a reminder of past state meddling, writes Robert Wright

It is easy to see why Hungary's flamboyant agriculture minister clings to control of Ferencváros sports club, his unglamorous post's most glamorous perk. Any public figure, after all, would love the reflected glory of their country's best-known, best-supported, most successful football team.

It is also easy, however, to see why the main governing Fidesz party wants to take Ferencváros away from Josef Torgyan, leader of the junior coalition Smallholders' party. The club - which also runs ice hockey and basketball sections - is financially weak, possibly corrupt, a drain on government finances and no longer able to compete internationally.

Like most of Hungarian football, it is a textbook case for reform. So, with the coalition partners at loggerheads, football - a subject dear to the hearts of a nation that in the 1950s produced one of the finest sports teams ever - has become one of Hungary's hottest political issues.

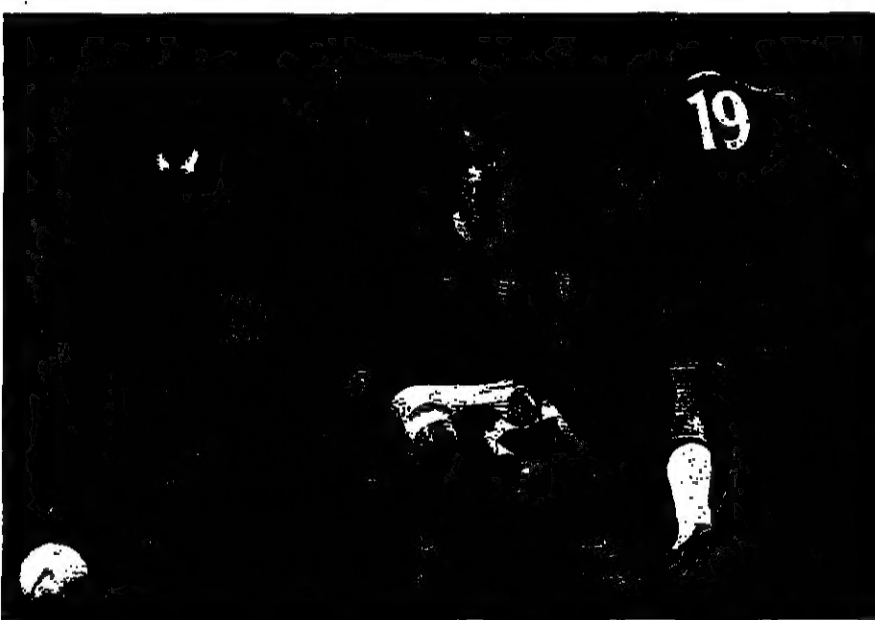
The game is also providing a reminder of the perils of state meddling in what would elsewhere be non-state affairs. Football was probably not on Viktor

Orban's mind when he shook hands last June to seal a coalition deal with Mr Torgyan, a rightwinger whose party, based on peasant interests, took 13 per cent of seats in May's general election.

If it had been, he might have noticed a flaw in the deal that secured him a parliamentary majority. Mr Orban promised the Smallholders four ministries, including agriculture and defence. Yet the new prime minister - who himself still plays for a fourth division league football side - planned to shake up one of the last vestiges of communism, the system of government backing for top clubs.

The coalition deal handed both Orban, the defence minister's club, and Ferencváros, the agriculture ministry club, to coalition partners unlikely to surrender them easily to the Fidesz-led new youth and sports ministry.

Mr Torgyan, a 65-year-old lawyer, is not a natural compromiser. A populist whose party included in its manifesto calls for a restored death penalty and a ban on land sales to foreigners, the Smallholders leader boasted recently he had issued more decrees since entering office



Viktor Orban, Hungarian prime minister, being tackled by a British parliamentary soccer team player, Philip French, during their friendly match last November in Budapest. The Hungarian MPs won 2-0. AP

than any other minister. Waning opinion poll ratings notwithstanding, he is widely suspected of wanting to become Hungary's state president next year.

Ferencváros officials are unwilling to talk about their new honorary president, but eyes at the club roll skyward at mention of his name. He is said to have completely reversed the previous government's policy of letting the club run itself.

László Kéri, senior researcher at the Hungarian Academy of Sciences' political science unit, says: "Torgyan knows it is absolutely reasonable to grab the opportunities represented by Ferencváros. To be a Ferencváros supporter is to be a good, average Hungarian."

The club is also a good political fit. Rogan Taylor,

director of the football research unit at Liverpool University in the UK, says Ferencváros was run down in Hungarian football's early-1990s golden age because of its association with inter-war, rightwing politics.

While the great Ferenc Puskas - recently voted fourth best player this century - was sent to working class Kispest-Honvéd, the army team, Ferencváros lost its best players and was sponsored by the politically unexciting agriculture ministry. That now gives the club its cachet, according to Tibor Vidos, of the UK lobbying company GJW Government Relations: "The other clubs were always associated with the power ministries."

But the disputes are also fuelled by worries over maladministration at both club and football association level. Mr Orban this week

backed the decision of his sports minister, Tamas Deutsch, to suspend the Hungarian football association's management over alleged illegality.

At Ferencváros, police are investigating the club's accounting. The club is looking more and more like an example of the wrong-headed state interference, which the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development warned last week threatened the smooth running of some partially privatised Hungarian companies.

Meanwhile, the coalition has yet to address seriously the problems of forcing Hungary's old-fashioned agriculture sector to reform so that it will be ready for EU membership. When they start administration, at both club and football association level, Mr Orban this week

## Albright to push Kosovo talks

By David Buchanan, Diplomatic Editor

Madeleine Albright, the US secretary of state, is to make a personal attempt this weekend to break the impasse in the Kosovo peace talks, which western mediators blame mainly on Serbian rather than Albanian negotiators.

The secretary of state is expected to visit the talks in the French presidential chateau of Rambouillet near Paris tomorrow in the company of her French and British counterparts, Hubert Védrine and Robin Cook, who are co-chairing the negotiations that began a week ago.

State Department officials said Mrs Albright wanted to make her own on-the-spot assessment of the talks.

Nato is poised to send peacekeepers into Kosovo if the negotiations succeed, or to bomb Yugoslavia if the talks collapse because of Serbian obstruction.

Mrs Albright's intervention at Rambouillet will be seen as leading US weight to so far fruitless mediation by European ministers.

But the Contact Group of mediating countries, which includes the US as well as European powers, was due in any case this weekend to evaluate progress in the Kosovo talks and, if it saw prospect of success, to extend negotiations for a second and final week.

The magnitude of the mediators' task was yesterday underlined again by Milan Milutinovic, the Serbian prime minister. After meeting his delegation at

Rambouillet, he repeated the Serbian side's willingness to sign a set of general peace principles set out by the Contact Group, and delivered a virtual ultimatum to the Kosovo Albanians to do the same.

"If they [Kosovar Albanians] sign, we will continue the negotiations," he told a Paris press conference. "If not, no negotiations."

UK officials pointed out yesterday that the Serbian delegation had changed some of the wording in the Contact Group's draft principles to try to trap the Albanians into signing away their long-term goal of independence.

On Thursday, Mr Cook complained of these tactics and praised the Albanians' co-operation. Yesterday, Mr Milutinovic retorted that

western ministers were trying to "protect their [Albanian] protégés".

To put further weight behind the Rambouillet mediation effort, Germany said yesterday it was "extremely likely" that it would call a meeting of all 15 European Union foreign ministers to discuss Kosovo in Paris tomorrow. A member of the six-nation Contact Group, Germany is also the current EU president.

A German spokesman said the aim of the EU meeting was to underscore that the Serbians and Albanians must reach a solution by the two-week deadline originally set by the Contact Group. However, the EU meeting appears to be dependent on ministers of the Contact Group also meeting in the French capital tomorrow.

## NEWS DIGEST

## THAILAND BANKRUPTCY LAWS

## Senate passes bill to set up specialised court

Thailand's Senate yesterday passed a bill to set up a specialised bankruptcy court, one of five crucial changes to the country's bankruptcy and foreclosure laws that the government of Chuan Leekpai, prime minister, is trying to steer through parliament.

Thai stocks rose 11 per cent on the news, led by bank issues. Should the entire package of bills become law, banks are expected to gain the upper hand in debt restructuring negotiations with their delinquent clients.

The version passed by the appointed Senate differs only slightly from the version passed earlier by the lower elected house of parliament, dominated by Mr Chuan's seven-party coalition.

The government must now decide whether to accept the Senate version or set up a joint committee to reconcile the differences. Should it opt for the former, the court could begin operation by the end of this month.

The International Monetary Fund, which claims the bills are crucial for Thailand's economic recovery, has urged the government to pass the entire set of bills as quickly as possible, preferably by the end of the current parliamentary session in mid-March. Ted Sardacka, Bangkok

## JAPANESE OLYMPICS INVESTIGATION

## Nine IOC members accused

At least nine International Olympic Committee members violated rules in the selection process for the 1998 Nagano Winter Games, the Japan Olympic Committee said yesterday. Yoshiro Yagi, JOC secretary-general, said a formal investigation into the Nagano bid, which would be sent to the IOC, found that travel regulations were broken.

Mr Yagi did not name the IOC members. He said that given the limited information the JOC investigators had, a disclosure of the IOC delegates' names could "violate their human rights" and "lead to international problems".

The investigation was hampered because accounting books for the bidding process were destroyed in 1991, shortly after Nagano won the rights to host the Games.

Mr Yagi said the JOC would continue to investigate the bidding process to see if there were other irregularities. Reuters, Tokyo

## SWEDISH BANKING

## Repo rate down by 25 points

Sweden's central bank cut its key repo rate by 25 basis points to 3.15 per cent yesterday, pointing to low inflation and weaker than expected economic growth. Analysts said further cuts could be expected.

The bank also lowered its interest rate corridor in which the repo rate is set, cutting both the lending rate and deposit rate by 50 basis points to 4.25 per cent and 2.75 per cent respectively. The bank has lowered the repo rate by 70 basis points since the start of November last year.

The bank pointed to the negative trend in business expectations and manufacturing orders, which indicated that exports and investments would be lower than expected. Private consumption, however, remained strong.

"We are expecting more cuts and we think there is room for another in connection with the publication of the Riksbank's inflation report on March 25," said Christopher Halldin, an economist with Svenska Handelsbanken. "I think we could see the Swedish rate below that of the European Central Bank; there is no reason not."

He felt the premium above the ECB rate was disappearing as the market saw the country's inflation target and fiscal policy as credible. Nicholas George, Stockholm

## SPANISH INFLATION

## Rise in prices lifts rate 0.1%

Spanish consumer prices rose 0.4 per cent in January to nudge the year-on-year inflation rate up from 1.4 per cent in December to 1.5 per cent, according to the national statistics institute.

Transport and food costs were blamed along with higher cigarette prices. But the underlying rate, leaving out volatile fresh food and energy items, also showed a 0.4 point rise during the month, leaving the 12-month rate unchanged at 2.2 per cent. The government said it was still on track to meet its 1.5 per cent inflation target for the year. Last year's rate, preceding the launch of the euro, was Spain's lowest since the current price index started being compiled in 1982. David White, Madrid

## US DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

## Irradiated meat on the menu

Irradiated meat could be on the American menu in the near future after the US Department of Agriculture yesterday announced rules to cover the process. Dan Glickman, the US agriculture secretary, said radiation would be allowed for the treatment of refrigerated or frozen uncooked meat and some meat products. All irradiated meat and meat products would have to carry a special symbol and a similar statement or logo would have to be "conspicuously" displayed on unpackaged meat products.

The Food and Drug Administration opened the way for irradiated red meat more than a year ago when it endorsed the treatment. That step came in the wake of a huge recall of ground beef by Hudson Foods, a meat packaging business, after a dangerous strain of the E coli bacteria was found in hamburgers from its Nebraska plant.

Scientists say irradiation is one of the most effective ways to control disease-causing micro-organisms, and the radiation doses are said to be too low to make the food radioactive.

Consumer reaction is largely untested, although an earlier Gallup survey suggested concerns were on a par with those surrounding food preservatives. Nikki Taft, Chicago

## UKRAINE BANKS

## Ministry negotiates over T-bills

Ukraine's finance ministry said yesterday it was negotiating with banks in trouble after a decision to convert all Treasury bills held by domestic banks falling due in February into longer-term bonds.

"We are negotiating with those banks that are experiencing liquidity problems," the finance ministry said. A special telephone hotline has been set up. It said the main problem facing banks was their ability to meet a 2 per cent increase in reserve requirements imposed by the central bank on Wednesday.

Treasury bills account for virtually all Ukrainian banks' short-term liquid assets. Some banks have complained the conversion could render them temporarily insolvent.

While the finance ministry has described the conversion as "voluntary", the banks called it "mandatory" and have warned that a default by Ukraine could cause \$1bn-\$1.7bn of eurobonds to fall due immediately, under cross-default provisions. Charles Clover, Kiev

Still no way stopping the Starr express

Republican split along fault line



## CLINTON'S ACQUITTAL



From left: Aug 17 Media gives well-to-do coverage as explicit details of Clinton's relationship with Monica Lewinsky are revealed in the Starr report; Aug 18 Clinton the family man with wife and daughter on the White House lawn; Nov 19 Independent counsel Kenneth Starr is sworn in for the House impeachment hearing; Jan 7 Action moves to the Senate as Chief Justice William Rehnquist is sworn in for the president's trial

## Still no way of stopping the Starr express

By Mark Suzman in Washington

The trial may be over, but the long-running investigation of President Bill Clinton is not.

Kenneth Starr, the special prosecutor, is still pursuing several leads that may lead to further charges against the president. He is also considering serving a criminal indictment on Mr Clinton for perjury and obstruction of justice in covering up his affair with Monica Lewinsky that would be pursued in the courts rather than Congress.

The constitutionality of the latter move is unclear - and even if Mr Starr may well wait until after Mr Clinton leaves office. But the same is not true of all his other investigations. He has already indicated that he does not expect to file charges relating to allegations that the president and Hillary Clinton acted improperly in firing the White House travel staff and using FBI files of government personnel.

But the apparently indefatigable independent counsel is continuing to push forward with the Whitewater land deal he was originally appointed to investigate. He is pressing new charges against Webster Hubbell and Susan McDougal, two friends of the president from Arkansas who have both already served time in prison as a result of Mr Starr's investigations. Despite his lack of success to date, he hopes they might be persuaded to testify against Mr Clinton to avoid further punishment.

Mr Starr's office is also

looking at separate allegations by Kathleen Willey, a former White House volunteer who claims Mr Clinton harassed her. He has secured a friend of Ms Willey who helped discredit her claim last year. He is also checking whether the White House tried to orchestrate a broader smear campaign against her.

On the flip side, the Justice Department confirmed this week it was investigating Mr Starr's office for possible misdeeds, including allegations that he violated Ms Lewinsky's right to an attorney when his staff first interviewed her in January 1998. If they find any evidence of wrongdoing, that may be seen as sufficient cause to fire the independent counsel, although such a move would have serious political repercussions.

But even if the US has not seen the last of Mr Starr, it seems increasingly likely that it will soon see the end of the independent counsel statute that led to his appointment. Public outrage against the Starr report and its aftermath has helped fuel a growing belief in Congress that having unelected investigators with unlimited budgets is not the best way to scrutinise alleged misdeeds by public officials.

The law comes up for formal review this year, with the first Senate hearings due this month. There is a consensus that it needs to be scrapped or heavily modified.

Was it such a bad thing?

Page 5

## Net junkies have their own heroes and a demon

By Nancy Dunne and Nancy McCard in Washington

When she is not roaming the Internet, StarnHope pre-tends she is a casting director for a forthcoming film. *The Rise and Fall of Bill Clinton*.

First she signs up Barbara Streisand to play Paula Jones (pre-nice job), alleged victim of Mr Clinton's lust in an Arkansas hotel room. Linda Tripp, Monica Lewinsky's turncoat friend, is played by the attorney-general, Janet Reno - in a wig.

Bill Clinton plays himself, having repeatedly proved his acting abilities.

Like many who frequent the news chat rooms of America Online, under aliases to protect their pri-

vacy, "StarnHope" from Miami, Florida, has been mesmerised by the revelations of semi-sex near the Oval Office. Only the Washington media can rival the new junkies of the Net in their encyclopaedic knowledge of Bill Clinton's transgressions and tribulations.

StarnHope is among the nearly two-thirds of the American people who, polls show, opposed the president's impeachment. "People are comfortable with the economy," she says. "If you're sleeping in a feathered bed and the alarm goes off, you don't want to get up."

Judging from the chat rooms, electronic mail and messages posted on AOL, Americans - who were fascinated when the Lewinsky

scandal broke - have had much less interest in the impeachment. While senators were wringing their hands over procedural questions, opinion among the president's supporters on the Net long ago coalesced.

The overriding sentiment is a deep distaste for Kenneth Starr, the independent counsel, and what is seen as the self-righteous pieties of many of the Republican impeachment "managers".

"I'm tuned out on impeachment. Sick of poise, bragging, posturing, etc." Barbi474 wrote in frustration recently in one chat room. "Definitely Republicans are again shooting themselves in foot."

Larry Flynt, publisher of Hustler magazine, who

offered \$1m for anyone who could prove they had an affair with a senior official or member of Congress, has become a folk hero. "At least he spent his money, not ours," said SCthoma3872, in a reference to the highly resented \$50m price tag on the Starr investigation.

Among Democrats there is revulsion against the president's extra-curricular activities. But there is still respect for his abilities as a politician. "He is probably the smartest president we've ever had," said Makinsauca.

"He just has trouble with his lower half."

The more sophisticated news addicts - conservatives and liberals - tend to chew over the weekday developments between 9pm and

11pm. In AOL's New York Times chat group, rules enforced by on-line "hosts" keep the conversation from getting too insulting, but Clinton fans are venomous about Mr Starr.

Sharkey, who holds a PhD in English, sees Mr Starr as "a reincarnation" of Senator Joseph McCarthy, the most famous red-baiter of the 1950s. Mr Clinton's opponents seem "anti-feminist and racist".

Congressman Henry Hyde, leader of the House managers, has become a target of ridicule. It was revealed he had had a long-term affair with a married woman and tried to dismiss it as "a youthful indiscretion" although he was in his 40s at the time.

"I couldn't stop laughing at what Hyde was saying today about infidelity," said Thiasb97, the day the congressman delivered an impassioned final plea for the president's impeachment. "And as he bent over there was a large scarlet A on his shirt."

Beneath the banter, there is growing fear that if the president can be brought down by "partisan zealots", anyone is vulnerable - particularly those who chatter over the World Wide Web. In StarnHope's film of the president's downfall, the one shining moment comes when he slays the dragon of fear and paranoia by winning the battle over the self-righteous rightwing conspirators.

## Republican split along fault line

By Gerard Baker in Washington

The fact that five Republican senators yesterday broke ranks with their colleagues and voted not to convict President Bill Clinton on either of the two articles of impeachment demonstrates the ideological fault lines that have been visible in the party in the past few years.

But the identity of the five demonstrates even more strikingly the regional and geographical lines along which those faults run.

All of them hail from north-eastern states, where voters have repeatedly chosen a more liberal brand of Republicanism than those in the south, the Midwest or the Rocky Mountain states. Four of the senators - Olympia Snowe and Susan Collins of Maine, James Jeffords of Vermont and John Chafee of Rhode Island - are from New England. The fifth, Arlen Specter, who chose to take the quixotic route of voting "not proven" on the charges of perjury and obstruction of justice - is from Pennsylvania.

Though they all emphasised their judgment was judicial and not political - arguing that the offences of perjury and obstruction of justice Mr Clinton is alleged to have committed did not rise to the constitutional level of "high crimes and

misdeamors" - their decision was in line with the liberal Republicanism they have practised as legislators.

All five are to the left of most of their colleagues on the big social policy questions. Four of them - Ms Collins was not then a member - voted with Democrats and a few other Republicans in 1996 for a bill that would have protected employment rights of homosexuals. Three of the New England senators voted to uphold Mr Clinton's veto of a bill to outlaw partial-birth abortions.

Their vote yesterday was reflected also in the votes of the five House members who opposed Mr Clinton's impeachment in December - three of whom were also from north-eastern states. The Republican party at large in the north-east is now firmly out of step with the rest of the country. Three prominent Republican governors in the region - George Pataki of New York, Christine Todd Whitman of New Jersey and former Governor William Weld of Massachusetts - have governed along similar liberal lines.

As most of the Republican party has moved to the right in recent years, embracing a more aggressive brand of religious conservatism, the position of its north-eastern liberal moderates has become more uncomfortable.

### BUSINESSES FOR SALE

#### RETIREMENT SALE

Please contact either Jane Vining on 01705 231006 or Box B265, Fincham Road, One Southway Bridge, London SE1 9EL

#### For Sale

#### RETAIL FASHION CHAIN

Well established with stable market and good prospects for expansion. Currently controlled by successful management team. Located South and South West, UK. Owner retiring. Principals only reply to Box 50478, Financial Times, One Southway Bridge, London SE1 9EL

#### FRANCHISING

#### DYNAMIC RECESSION-PROOF EXECUTIVE BUSINESS

If you have a business background and want to transfer your corporate skills into your own home based business, becoming a cost management consultant is the current reality of corporations, energy and power costs will be the business and benefit monthly profits building for you.

Outstanding Income Potential. You are able to earn large ongoing income working on a results only basis charging your average \$500 with your clients over a 3 year term. Outstanding training on an exclusive business system. Complete support from professional business and marketing experts. Joining you to become a success. Franchise cost £14,995.00 + VAT. [www.auditel.co.uk](http://www.auditel.co.uk) Call 01962 863915 fax 01962 854520 or email info@auditel.net

### BUSINESS SOFTWARE

#### Technical Analysis Software

#### INDEXIA

Real-time & End-of-Day with the following feeds:

- Free Real-time data from N-TV, Sky TV & Reuters
- Real-time & End-of-Day data from ProQuest, Market-Bye, DBC Signal, Reuters, BIS, Reuters
- End-of-Day data from Citicorp, ESI, RegisData, CSI, StockData

[www.indexia.com](http://www.indexia.com)

INDEXIA Research Ltd  
121 High Street, Northampton  
NN4 2JN, UNITED KINGDOM  
Tel: +44 (0)1603 570015  
Fax: +44 (0)1603 570016

#### CONVERTIBLE BONDS

#### LAUNCH OF VERSION 8.2

Universal Convertibles Add-In

Setting a new industry standard for accuracy, speed and ease of use.

Analysing portfolios of Convertible Bonds (including warrants and non-warrants) with automated calls, puts, conversions and credit spreads. Improved risk modelling via price to Bond equivalents, real-time feeds and in-house calculations. Up to a multi-decade interest rate-sensitivity ladder view, with instant reversion.

Standardised Financial Risk Management (Financial Systems Software (FSS) Ltd) completed over 20,000 issues globally. Headquartered in London, UK, with offices in New York, USA, and Hong Kong.

London EC2N 3JF

Tel: +44 (0)1753 200 200

Fax: +44 (0)1753 200 200

E-mail: [info@fss.co.uk](mailto:info@fss.co.uk)

Visit our web site [www.fss.co.uk](http://www.fss.co.uk)

and download a FREE 30 DAY TRIAL

#### UNIVERSAL ADD-INS

#### LAUNCH OF VERSION 8.2

"Bonds Election Options Futures Stocks"

"No Arbitrage Volatility Term Structure" "Portfolio Sensitivity Analysis" "Multi Asset Monte Carlo Analysis" MFSAI provides the most widely used analytical models, financial calculations, advanced derivatives portfolio analysis, income, credit, commodity and risk management tools. Fully integrated with Excel, Access, Visual Basic, C and C++ can be linked with most real-time feeds. International Financial Risk Management (Financial Systems Software (FSS) Ltd) established 1986 - 20,000 issues globally. Headquartered in London, UK, with offices in New York, USA, and Hong Kong.

London EC2N 3JF

Tel: +44 (0)1753 200 200

Fax: +44 (0)1753 200 200

E-mail: [info@fss.co.uk](mailto:info@fss.co.uk)

Visit our web site [www.fss.co.uk](http://www.fss.co.uk)

and download a FREE 30 DAY TRIAL

#### CENTRAL SOFTWARE

WEBSITE: [www.centralsoftware.com](http://www.centralsoftware.com)

High quality financial software

Banking Systems

Unified Fund Administration

International and U.K. Clients

Used by Major Financial Institutions

Multi-Currency

Full Windows System

Microsoft SQL or Oracle Database

Contact: John Ormrod

or Lawrence Sheen

Telephone: +44 (0) 1634 630957

Fax: +44 (0) 1634 630783

### RARE OPPORTUNITY

#### RAPIDLY EXPANDING ASBESTOS REMOVAL COMPANY

SOUTH WEST OF ENGLAND

98 T/O £260,000 - net profit £33,000

Projected 99 T/O £1.3 million

- net profit £300,000

Very Low Capital Base

£12 million

Box 40032, Financial Times

No 1 Southway Bridge

London SE1 9EL

### BUSINESS SERVICES

#### 1st COMPUTER TRADERS LTD

We want your

hard disc drives

New/Failed

Tel: 01827 55555

Fax: 01827 66666

email: [sales@1st.com](mailto:sales@1st.com)

### CONTRACTS & TENDERS



## TANZANIA ELECTRIC SUPPLY COMPANY LIMITED

### PRE-QUALIFICATION FOR CONSULTANCY SERVICES TO DEVELOP THE ZAMBIA-TANZANIA 330KV INTERCONNECTOR PROJECT FOR PRIVATE INVESTMENT CONSIDERATION

ZESCO LTD of Zambia and TANESCO of Tanzania have embarked on the development of a 330Kv transmission line from Pensulo substation, Serenje, Zambia to Mwakibete substation, Mbeya, Tanzania. The length of the line is approximately 690km.

A techno-economic feasibility study has been done by an inter utility study team from ZESCO, TANESCO and ESKOM. A financial and economic justification study has also been undertaken. A Power Purchase Agreement and a Pre-qualification document has been drafted. Tariff negotiation process has commenced. There is now need to identify potential private investors and formulate a Request For Proposal (RFP).

A Consultant is therefore being sought to assist in the Pre-qualification of Potential Private Investors and to prepare and adjudicate the RFP in order to prepare the project for investment consideration. The Consultant is also required to assist in setting up a realistic program of events, target dates and formal outputs.

The applicants' expression of interest must be in English and must include the following:

- A comprehensive individual profile or company curriculum vitae
- Organisation structure and capacity to manage this kind of project
- Audited financial statements for the past 3 years
- Reference for similar assignments already undertaken within the past 7 years including key personnel, work done and time spent on similar assignments
- Contact details and physical addresses
- Any association/partnership with local firms

Expression of interest should be addressed to:

The Company Secretary ZESCO LTD P.O. BOX 33304 Lusaka Zambia Fax: +260 1 223971/237601	OR The Company Secretary TANESCO LTD P.O. BOX 9024 Dar es Salaam Tanzania Fax: 255 051 113836
-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

And should be received not later than 12:00 hrs on Monday, 15th March 1999.



## INTERNATIONAL

MARKETS DISAPPOINTED LONG-TERM RATES NOT AFFECTED

## Bank of Japan eases interest rates lower

By Michio Nakamoto in Tokyo

The Bank of Japan yesterday bowed to growing political pressure to ease monetary policy by guiding short-term interest rates lower.

But the bank described demands that it should curb rising long-term rates by directly purchasing Japanese government bonds (JGBs) as "lacking common sense".

Japan's central bank said after its policy board meeting yesterday that it would lower its target for the overnight call rate to 0.15 per cent from 0.25 per cent and consider a further reduction if necessary.

The central bank said it would also halve the rate on an emergency lending facility for banks to 0.25 per cent and provide ample funds to the markets through its usual monetary operations.

Masaru Hayami, BoJ governor, acknowledged the adverse impact that higher long-term interest rates and the rise in the yen's value against the dollar had on the Japanese economy.

But he defended the bank's decision to lower short-term rates, rather than ease long-term rates by increasing its market purchases of JGBs, which he

said would damage "not only the Bank of Japan's credibility but also the credibility of Japan".

"I think this is the best we could do," Mr Hayami said. The bank said the economy might fall into a deflationary spiral and monetary policy would be a factor in determining whether confidence returned to the private sector and deflation was avoided. "I think you can say we have supported [the return of private sector confidence] from the monetary side," said Mr Hayami.

The BoJ's move, however, fell far short of market hopes for decisive action to reverse the trend of rising long-term interest rates and a high yen.

After initially falling more than ¥1 to ¥115.75 against the dollar and ¥129.30 against the euro after news of the BoJ move, the yen rebounded to ¥114.60 and ¥128.60 respectively in London trading. The yield on the benchmark 10-year JGB, although down from its recent high of 2.44 per cent, was at 2.08 per cent in Tokyo.

"This is a very tiny cut in short-term rates. It's certainly not what people were looking for in terms of a change in policy," commented Peter Morgan, chief economist at HSBC Securities in Tokyo. "Whatever benefit there will be on the JGB market will be limited," he said.

Pressure on the bank to take further action is likely to return once the impact of yesterday's move wears off. After the BoJ's move, Keizo Obuchi, Japan's prime minister, said: "It is important to have continued broad-ranging debate on our right JGB-buying operations," according to Jiji, a Japanese news agency.

The BoJ decision came after mounting calls from the ruling party and others that the central bank needed to act on rising long-term rates. It also follows a request to the bank by Toshiaki Sakai, head of the Economic Planning Agency, to expand the money supply. Mr Sakai attended the BoJ policy board meeting yesterday for the first time since assuming office.

Mr Hayami himself suggested yesterday the move on short-term rates was aimed at easing long-term rates. "The BoJ cannot move long-term rates directly but I hope... indirectly [this] will result in long-term rates heading lower," he said.



Kiichi Miyazawa, Japan's finance minister, relaxes during a Lower House budget committee debate in Tokyo yesterday

## Officials to seize Timor car assets

By Sander Thomas in Jakarta

Indonesian customs officials said yesterday they were about to seize assets of a car company owned by a son of former president Suharto, ending months of dithering about a project that has become the focus of a corruption probe against the former president.

Timor Putra Nasional missed a deadline on Thursday for payment of some Rp2,000bn (\$225m) in overdue import duties on 40,000 units produced by Kia Motors, its Korean partner, before completion of a factory in Indonesia.

Timor is the brainchild of Hutomo Mandala Putra, nicknamed Tommy, the youngest and most flamboyant son of Mr Suharto and Timor's majority shareholder. An avid car-racer who owned shares in Lamborghini, Mr Hutomo often drove a blue Rolls-Royce rather than the cheap Timor he wanted to build.

State banks were forced to lend the company \$600m on friendly terms and tax benefits threatened to wipe out competitors, causing the World Trade Organisation to warn of sanctions. But more than 14,000 of the 40,000 imported cars have yet to be sold, as customers balk at poor quality, lack of spare parts and a less than politically correct image that has made Timor the target of recent riots.

Officials have repeatedly warned Timor in recent months but Daeng Nazler, head of customs in Jakarta, said the finance minister had only decreed last month that the customs office could seize assets. The tax office is expected to press for an additional Rp1,000bn in overdue taxes.

"We just have to identify which assets we will seize," Mr Daeng said. "This is a new job for us, so please be patient. We may be able to seize the private assets of Tommy as well."

Few Indonesians believe that will happen, given the lack of follow-up to months of questioning by prosecutors of Mr Hutomo, his father and other officials who supported the project.

The fate of the Timor syndrome, the fall from grace of the Suharto business empire, but it also highlights the way its founders have evaded highly publicised efforts to curb it.

One source close to the company said that contractors had continued work on building factory facilities until early December as if nothing had changed. "They had paid for everything already, so we might as well finish it," he said. "When they ran out of cash they paid in Timor cars and metals. But it is very difficult to sell Timor cars - like selling stolen mobile phones."

Company sources say the production lines, the most costly part of the project, have arrived as well.

The factory site yesterday was deserted, except for 40 lightly armed guards and eight policemen. One building was close to completion but two others were metal skeletons. Thousands of unsold Timor cars were parked nearby.

"When they started building the factory, Tommy would often drop by," one of the guards said. "He would drive a Mercedes jeep. But I haven't seen him for a year."

## US imposes anti-dumping duties on steel

By Nancy Dunne in Washington and Alexandra Harney in Tokyo

US steel companies are to file a second round of anti-dumping cases next week in the wake of preliminary findings from the Commerce Department yesterday which imposed high duties on imports from Japan and Brazil.

The second series of cases will focus on surging imports of cut-to-length steel plate. Possible targets of the complaints are Japan again and Korea, India, Indonesia, France, Italy, the Czech Republic and Macedonia.

The first cases were aimed at surges of hot-rolled steel, the industry's basic commodity. Because importers expected high anti-dumping duties to be imposed - and backdated to November 14 - imports of hot-rolled have already dropped.

Russia and Brazil are expected to negotiate import restraint agreements in exchange for the suspension of the dumping cases. Although they would be allocated a limit on imports, they would benefit from higher prices when supplies fell.

"I hope this will be the end of it," said Horst Buelte, president of the American Institute for International Steel. "The hot-rolled market has bottomed out, and the American industry has succeeded in increasing prices."

But imports of steel plate, used in bridges, boats and fabricated products, have begun to rise, said John Armstrong of US Steel. "It's like plugging a dyke. You

stick your finger in one hole, and it springs a leak somewhere else." Steelmakers often switch from one product to another when demand dries up.

The steel cases are just part of the campaign against imports by the steel industry and the steelworkers' union. Having failed to induce the administration to impose steel quotas, the industry has sought protection from Congress. Several bills have already been introduced.

Mr Buelte was sceptical about the need for new anti-dumping cases, citing the domestic industry's "pretty decent" fourth-quarter results.

Meanwhile, Japan's troubled steel industry yesterday announced yet more upward revisions of expected losses as three steel manufacturers warned of lower than expected prices and an expected shortfall in export volumes.

The profits warnings by Kobe Steel, NKK and Sumitomo Metals follow similar announcements by Nippon Steel and Kawasaki Steel, only weeks before the financial year ends in March.

While analysts said exports were unlikely to contract further, the warnings underscore the seriousness of the problems facing the country's steel industry.

Squeezed by a collapse in demand, Japanese companies are struggling to cope with nearly 20 per cent excess capacity. The Ministry of International Trade and Industry is considering extending emergency loans to large manufacturers in exchange for restructuring.

## Rubin warns banking law may face veto

By Deborah McGregor in Washington

Robert Rubin, US treasury secretary, warned yesterday that President Bill Clinton would veto legislation aimed at modernising American banking laws unless it addressed key administration concerns about federal regulatory issues and community lending restrictions by banks.

Mr Rubin's comments, delivered on the final day of public hearings before the House banking committee, made it clear how difficult it will be to achieve reform of the antiquated Glass-Steagall Act, even though most industry and government officials broadly agree that the 1933 banking law desperately needs updating.

"In our view, financial modernisation legislation can produce significant benefits, but the job must be done right," said Mr Rubin. The administration objects to several provisions in a bill - known as HR 10 - sponsored by James Leach, Republican chairman of the committee. Last year, the administration also made a veto threat after Mr Leach's legislation was narrowly passed by the House. In the end, no veto was needed because the bill died in the Senate.

Mr Rubin strongly objects

to the current bill's prohibition on banks conducting new financial activities through their subsidiaries.

This puts him directly at odds with Alan Greenspan, the Federal Reserve chairman, who believes banks should be allowed to offer a broader range of financial services, but only if they conduct these activities exclusively through bank holding company affiliates. The new financial titans that result from a lowering of barriers between banking, insurance and securities firms would thus be squarely subjected to the scrutiny of the Fed.

In an attempt to end the regulatory turf battle, Mr Rubin said the Treasury did not intend that the Fed be excluded from oversight in a post-Glass-Steagall world. "We also believe it is very important that the Federal Reserve Board maintain its strong connection with the banking system," he said.

Mr Rubin also said he had no objection to requiring the largest banks "to retain a bank holding company, thereby assuring the Federal Reserve a central supervisory role". However, it is unclear whether such reassuring words are enough to meet Mr Greenspan's strong objections to allowing banks to diversify through their operating subsidiaries.

## Kazakhs 'seized company assets'

By Anthony Robinson in Moscow

Transworld Group, the London and Geneva-based metals and commodities trading company, said it faced the effective expropriation of its assets in Kazakhstan, amounting to a \$400m loss, following an unpublished ruling by the Kazakh supreme court, which the company says has no jurisdiction in the case.

The ruling by the Kazakh court is the latest act in a long-running dispute between Transworld and the Chodiev group, its former joint venture partners in Kazakhstan which originally agreed to accept international arbitration in the case of any dispute. It is the latest in a lengthening list of property disputes between international investors and their Kazakh partners or the Kazakh government.

The supreme court ruling dated January 27 purports to invalidate more than \$200m in loans and trade contracts and transfers Transworld's 30 per cent shareholding in a Kazakh power plant and three iron, alumina and ferrochrome plants to the Chodiev group and their management company, Kazakhstan Mineral Resources Corporation (KMRC). It also awarded KMRC \$200m in punitive damages for Transworld's alleged mismanagement of the plants.

Transworld has refused to submit to the Kazakh court on the grounds that it has no jurisdiction over the venture and what it calls "the highly irregular nature of the proceedings and absence of due legal process".

Alan Bekhor, managing director of Transworld metals, said in a telephone interview that the group invested \$750m in the four plants between 1994 and 1997, including the \$200m it paid for a 30 per cent stake in the joint venture in which the Kazakh government, through the state property fund, retained a 40 per cent holding. KMRC, which is registered in the British Virgin Islands, owns the remaining 30 per cent.

"KMRC made no such investment and bore none of the risks but now enjoys full control of the plants and apparently the patronage of the Kazakh courts."

"It's like a bad pantomime where no good deed goes unpunished." Transworld, which was earlier forced out of Russia amid accusations of making excess profits from its aluminium and other businesses and of using transfer pricing to avoid taxes, now intends to seek justice in its Kazakh dispute through the British courts. "One has to be prepared for a rough ride in places like Kazakhstan but not such a brazen setting aside of the law and the rules of fair competition," Mr Bekhor added.

## HK to resume land sales as it faces \$6.5bn budget deficit

By Louise Lucas and Rahul Jacob in Hong Kong

The Hong Kong government said yesterday it would resume land sales, which were suspended last June in an attempt to prop up the ailing property market.

The government is the sole supplier of undeveloped land, and the proceeds have helped fund its traditionally big fiscal surpluses. The moratorium on land sales has put the government on course for an estimated budget deficit of HK\$6.5bn (\$850m).

A new mechanism for selling will be introduced to ensure confidence is not sapped by lack of interest among developers. Demand at land auctions is a barometer of confidence, which has been fragile since Hong

Kong's property bubble burst in late 1997. Prices have roughly halved since then.

Only 24 sites, totalling 30 hectares, are being offered through the usual auction and tender methods. They include several plum sites.

In addition, a "reserve list" of 33 sites will be open to interested developers who must submit a minimum bid. An acceptable bid would then trigger an auction.

"What we have done for the market is to say, 'Here is the land. If you want it, apply for it'," said Robert Pope, director of lands.

Adrian Ngan, head of Hong Kong research at BNP Paribas, said the system enabled the government to manage expectations.

The resumption of land

sales was welcomed by the stock market, which rallied sharply in the last hour of trading on hearing the news.

The benchmark Hang Seng index closed up 3.06 per cent at 9,425.42 yesterday.

However, not all participants were enthusiastic.

"Investors think it marks the bottom of the market, which would be the case if developers or the government had absolute freedom of choice on this one," said Mark Simpson, head of Hong Kong research at Nomura International.

Nomura, in contrast, estimates property prices will fall another 25 per cent.

The government is seen as having little option. Failure to resume land sales would have resulted in another hefty budget deficit in the next fiscal year and potentially created a shortage of homes.

Hong Kong has become addicted to this rich source of income: in the 1997 fiscal year land auctions directly brought in HK\$70bn, according to economists; in the coming fiscal year resumed land sales are expected to generate about HK\$20bn to HK\$25bn.

The government is putting smaller plots up for sale in an attempt to encourage smaller developers to participate.

But some analysts have warned that Hong Kong's current credit squeeze could exclude non blue-chip names which are finding it more difficult to raise funding.

"The big developers may continue to strengthen the oligopoly that exists in the market," said Mr Simpson.

tially created a shortage of homes.

Hong Kong has become addicted to this rich source of income: in the 1997 fiscal year land auctions directly brought in HK\$70bn, according to economists; in the coming fiscal year resumed land sales are expected to generate about HK\$20bn to HK\$25bn.

The government is putting smaller plots up for sale in an attempt to encourage smaller developers to participate.

But some analysts have warned that Hong Kong's current credit squeeze could exclude non blue-chip names which are finding it more difficult to raise funding.

"The big developers may continue to strengthen the oligopoly that exists in the market," said Mr Simpson.

## Amnesty defends its name against fulsome internet rival

By Nouda Khalil

Amnesty International and Tunisia are battling it out on the internet, after the human rights organisation discovered that a website bearing the "amnesty" name was singing the praises of Tunisia's tolerance and respect for human rights.

Amnesty-tunisia.org, started by a Lebanese businessman in Paris with "friendships" in Tunisia, could not contrast more with an Amnesty International report on the North African country. With pages taken right out of official Tunisian government booklets, it says, for example, that "the policy of safeguarding human rights and developing public liberties is consid-

ered by international observers as the vanguard of the social policy of President Zine el Abidine Ben Ali".

The Tunisian government denies violating human rights and points to the rights of Tunisian women - probably the most liberal in the Arab world - as proof of its tolerance.

However, Amnesty - like other human rights organisations - has for years accused the Tunisian authorities of widespread violations such as torture, imprisonment of prisoners of conscience, unfair trials, lack of freedom of expression and association and censorship.

"Virtually everyone known or suspected of membership or links with unauthorised political opposition groups, whether Islamists or leftwing, are accused of 'terrorist' or 'criminal' activities," says the Amnesty website. It also includes testimony from Radhia Nasraoui, a respected human rights lawyer who is awaiting trial.

The Tunisian government denies violating human rights and points to the rights of Tunisian women - probably the most liberal in the Arab world - as proof of its tolerance.

However, Amnesty - like other human rights organisations - has for years accused the Tunisian authorities of widespread violations such as torture, imprisonment of prisoners of conscience, unfair trials, lack of freedom of expression and association and censorship.

"Virtually everyone known or suspected of membership or links with unauthorised political opposition groups, whether Islamists or leftwing, are accused of 'terrorist' or 'criminal' activities," says the Amnesty website. It also includes testimony from Radhia Nasraoui, a respected human rights lawyer who is awaiting trial.

## Chinese missile threat fuels division and insecurity among Taiwanese

Anxious Taipei is looking to its friends in Congress and sophisticated anti-missile defences, reports Mure Dickie



The US has yet to make any formal proposal on its theatre missile defence (TMD) plan to Taipei, but congressional enthusiasm for Taiwanese involvement has been taken by many on the island as an implied invitation. The project is seen by some as a panacea that would not only neutralise China's most effective military threat but also tighten ties with Washington, the final guarantor of Taiwan's security.

The risks of such involvement would be great, however. Foreign interest in the Taiwan issue provokes visceral reactions in China, which would interpret Taiwan-US co-operation as a hostile act.

The likely involvement of

Japan, whose military intentions are viewed with great suspicion in Beijing, would further raise Chinese hackles. A fragile cross-strait rapprochement, already threatened by Chinese impatience for progress on reunification and Taiwan's lack of interest in such progress, would probably be doomed.

While the diplomatic cost of co-operation could be immediate, any benefits would be uncertain and slow in coming. An effective missile defence would require the interweaving of early warning systems and more than one kind of anti-missile weapon. The US army's prototype high-altitude system has failed five big tests in a row while the navy's Aegis destroyer-based alternative is still in its early stages.

But despite the huge investment Taiwanese involvement could require, the prospect of a solid security link with the Pentagon

is appealing for an island that has long been willing to spend large sums to influence US policy, says Yen Chen-shen of National Chengchi University's Institute of International Relations. "The influence we get might be worth more than the money it would cost," Mr Yen says. "We might not be able to get the technology, we might not be able to successfully defend against missiles, but... the US would be obliged to come to our assistance."

Such considerations are at the heart of support for TMD among Taiwan's opposition Democratic Progressive party (DPP), which favours eventual independence from China. But worries about China's reaction, the diversion of resources from other defence programmes and the huge potential for corruption associated with big-ticket research projects have also been widely aired.

Tang Fei, Taiwan's new defence minister, is seen as pro-involvement, although the ruling Nationalist party remains divided. Defence officials, who highlight China's development of cruise missiles as a further threat, say strengthening missile defences is vital but give few details of their plans.

"The Chinese communists' missile test firings made even clearer our pressing need to set up an anti-missile warfare capability," the ministry said this week in response to the report on China's recent deployment.

Taiwan already has batteries of US Patriot PAC II Plus missiles, an improved version of the Patriots deployed by the US during the Gulf war, and of its home-grown Tien Kung II, an anti-missile missile that local media have described as of equivalent effectiveness. Taipei is eager to upgrade

its Patriot defences, which could eventually form part of a theatre-wide system, but in the meantime such lower tier shields cover only a small part of the island and are hampered by the weakness of early warning systems that would currently give only around two minutes' notice of an attack.

Some analysts tout the deployment of Taiwanese cruise missiles as an alternative to TMD, saying such weapons would be easier to develop, more reliable and cheaper.

"The best defence would really be offence," says Parris Chang, a DPP legislator who also advocates TMD development and the building of public morale to prevent the kind of panic that followed China's missile tests three years ago. "We need to strengthen civil defence because our people are so fragile in their mentality."







## COMMENT &amp; ANALYSIS

## FINANCIAL TIMES

Number One Southwark Bridge, London SE1 9HL  
Tel: +44 171-873 3000 Telex: 922186 Fax: +44 171-407 5700

Saturday February 13 1999

## Banking on superman

The stock market's response this week to the appointment of Michael O'Neill as chief executive of Barclays was little short of euphoric. Much the same could be said of the response of the Barclays board, which acquiesced in a remuneration package for this 52-year-old Bank of America official that positively dwarfed the sums usually accorded to managers of UK clearing banks.

Yet by US standards the package was not out of the ordinary. It also involved the commitment of £5m of Mr O'Neill's own money to Barclays' shares. And if he succeeds in transforming prospects at a bank that has lost its sense of strategic direction, the money will have been well spent. But will he succeed?

Mr O'Neill has a good-looking curriculum vitae, but this is the first time he has been asked to assume the role of Moses and lead a big bank out of the wilderness. Nor is it difficult to make a case that both markets and remuneration committees swallow too readily the concept of the manager as super-hero.

It is striking that young turks just below board level often complain about the ego trips of their chief executives, before succumbing to the super-hero thesis on reaching the boardroom. Moreover, the attribution of top-flight corporate performance to a single individual is usually easier to make in an entrepreneurial context than a managerial one.

Indeed, some of the best managed and most durable of the world's big businesses have a positively anonymous executive style. That said, one of the striking features of UK commercial banking is that it contains only one really notable success story; and as luck would have it, the success is largely due to the vision of a single man.

The bank in question is Lloyds TSB and the man is its chairman, Sir Brian Pitman. Yesterday he pleased the stock market once again with better than expected profits.

## Vision and courage

There can be no denying the vision nor the courage in implementation. When Barclays was still extracting large sums from its shareholders to squander in profligate growth, Lloyds retreated from wholesale banking and concentrated primarily on domestic retail operations.

This involved painful cost-cutting long before it became the norm in financial services. It also involved acquisitions in which Sir Brian Pitman refrained,

unlike others, from paying over the odds.

In short, he looked after his shareholders in the days before it was fashionable for bankers to do so. And whatever Mr O'Neill may say initially about his plans for Barclays, it would be surprising if he does not take a leaf out of the Lloyds TSB book by abandoning Barclays' residual aspirations to a continuing role in investment banking.

For the moment, the British clearing banks are on fairly comfortable terrain. Having seen the two previous business cycles end in savage recessions, analysts are pleasantly surprised when provisions and write-offs turn out to be lower than expected, as at Lloyds TSB this week.

## Potential growth

In the longer run retail financial services remain an area of potentially strong growth. As countries become richer, people invest more in sophisticated savings products such as pensions. Yet even for Lloyds TSB there are worrying questions ahead. The mortgage market may benefit from further interest rate cuts, but it is nonetheless mature. And it is worrying that growth in UK retail banking has often been very unrewarding for the banks' customers.

Leaving aside the horrors of pensions mis-selling, the margins across retail financial services are extremely high. Competition has been confined mainly to the business of attracting new customers. Inertia among existing customers has prevented those margins from being competed away as conventional economic wisdom would predict. But new entrants are now piling in, ranging from UK retailers and insurers to specialist US providers of plastic cards.

So customer inertia will not provide banks with a permanent cushion from economic reality. The analysts will soon be asking whether a sustainable business can be built on delivering poor bargains to the customer.

Retail bankers in the English-speaking world have shown themselves adept at cutting costs, especially via takeovers. What they now have to demonstrate is the fair and vision to generate increased profits from their existing operating businesses.

Bankers who have belatedly learned how to keep their shareholders sweet will have to learn even more belatedly how to stop treating customers like suckers. Super-heroes go to charm school - a good motto for Mr O'Neill.

## Mark Suzman asks whether the trial of President Clinton was really such a bad thing after all

Any lingering Republican hopes of going out with bang had long vanished. By the time the trial of the century limped to a suspenseless end yesterday there was barely enough energy left for a good whisper. Almost all that could be heard in America was a giant sucking sound of relief - made up of one part disappointment, one part pleasure and 10 parts utter, utter exhaustion after 13 long months of the Monica Lewinsky scandal.

But even as Congress started packing up for a week-long recess - to mark, paradoxically enough, Presidents' Day as a national holiday - pundits of every hue had begun to consider the broader significance of the whole, bizarre affair.

Did it have a lasting impact on the US or was it just a passing embarrassment that people can't forget about too soon? Could it all have been avoided? And were any lessons learned about the US political system?

Proper answers will not become clear for years or decades (if ever), but the preliminary answers appear to be that the affair is unlikely to leave a permanent scar on the US, though it will loom large in people's memories for years; that much of the process could have been avoided; and the most important lesson was that, even though everything took horribly much longer than almost anyone had expected, the political system did its job. The constitution was upheld. Dishonour was satisfied. And in the end the public got what it wanted: an indelible stain on Mr Clinton's record but no conviction, no removal from office and a chance for him to do something more substantial than just escape from a sex scandal.

Having preoccupied the world's most powerful country for over a year to the exclusion of almost anything else, the events were undoubtedly important, if only because they left little room for other issues to intrude. Day after day the issue dominated the media in a way that put previous scandals to shame. "It was like a black hole consuming everything else," observes Larry Sabato, a political scientist at the University of Virginia.

Even so eminent a Republican as James Baker, a former secretary of state, worried about the damage the trial was doing to the conduct of US foreign policy, since it made it harder for the president to forge a bipartisan consensus for his actions. Others have wondered whether greater US aggression in trade policy towards Europe and Japan is partly connected to the president's difficulties in persuading Congress to back a more open regime.

But with the black hole closing, it seems unlikely the effects will linger. A few changes of personnel in the administration, held up while the scandal was raging, may now be whisked through. Mr Clinton may quickly return to the battle with Republicans over tax cuts and whether and how to spend the federal



budget surplus.

But for voters, the less said, the better. The president has less than two years left in office and is widely popular (although his poll ratings may fall now he is no longer formally undergoing trial by his enemies).

If they think of it at all, most people appear to see the debate over impeachment as at root a cultural clash: a moment when the Sixties culture of permissiveness collided with an older, more inflexible moral code. Only a minority believes that any permanent social or moral change will result from Mr Clinton's tainted victory. New battles along the same fault lines will almost certainly emerge, but for the moment most people just seem relieved to see this particular struggle end.

One reason for popular dissatisfaction is the sense that the ordeal was not inevitable. Almost everyone acknowledges that, at root, the president had engaged in "segregious and reprehensible behaviour". But apart from a few days of genuine uncertainty over whether the president might be forced from office - first when the scandal broke in January 1998, again when the Starr report was released last September - the unfolding saga has been a triumph of process over substance.

Matters took so long to resolve because of three actions, all of which could have been short-circuited. First Mr Clinton's initial

denials and evasiveness in effect delayed any final resolution by months. So did the sustained and ultimately unsuccessful attempt by Kenneth Starr to push for a tougher immunity deal with Ms Lewinsky before she testified. And once those issues had partially been resolved, the Republican party prolonged matters by starting new battles over impeachment long after it was clear they had lost the war.

Conservative Republicans insist that the decision to acquit Mr Clinton is a shameful blot on the US that will have an impact on future generations. "The issues we're concerned with have

consequences far into the future," Henry Hyde, the head of the House Judiciary committee, thundered in his closing arguments this week. "Because the real damage is not to the individuals involved but to the American system of justice, and especially the principle that no one is above the law."

But despite Mr Hyde's eloquence and evident conviction,

his view is not widely shared. The early reaction among legal and constitutional experts is that apart from some damage to presidential prerogatives - the president will no longer be able to claim private conversations with aides in the hearing of secret service agents are privileged - the scandal is unlikely to have a dramatic impact on the justice system. And while the bar for future impeachments might have been raised, there seems little danger that Congress would be reluctant to prosecute more serious crimes by a future president.

Some substantive changes are possible. The independent counsel law is very likely to be revamped by Congress, perhaps to reduce the counsel's powers. Less convincingly, politicians of all stripes are calling for an end to what has become known as the "politics of personal destruction" - the attempt to make private lives part of public debate. There may even be a backlash in the short term. But already, some of next year's presidential hopefuls such as vice-president Dan Quayle are calling for tough scrutiny of the candidates' personal behaviour.

In other words, after yesterday's votes, politics more or less as usual seems set to resume on Capitol Hill. Congress may or may not manage to pass some big legislation like social security reform this year. Democrats may or may not manage to win back control of the House of Represen-

tatives in 2000. The public may or may not pay attention, depending in large part on whether the economy continues to boom.

And that is itself perhaps the most profound lesson of the whole affair. The sight of both parties following such a bitter and divisive national convulsion with promises of co-operation says much about the inherent resilience and durability of the US political system.

As William Safire, a prominent critic of Mr Clinton and former aide to Richard Nixon, acknowledged this week, the system worked. The venerable US constitution once again displayed its strengths. The impeachment process may have been cumbersome, but it functioned effectively and delivered a verdict in accord with public opinion.

Most important of all, throughout the long arduous process, there was never any real uncertainty, either domestically or internationally, about US political stability. Even had Mr Clinton been forced to hand over to vice-president Al Gore, the country faced the prospect with relative equanimity.

The US may have lost some worldwide respect. But back home, while many Americans will celebrate Presidents' Day with a touch of dismay, regretting the way that Mr Clinton has tarnished the office of Lincoln and Washington, most will strongly back the Senate's decision to let him to keep his job.

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

## Compromise over duty-free

From Mr David Barnshaw.

Sir, You report ("New twist in duty free dispute", February 10) that health groups and others have entered the fray over the abolition of duty-free in Europe. They argue that the lobby supporting the continuation of duty free is effectively a front for the tobacco industry. No doubt they have a point: the tobacco industry will be an obvious beneficiary of any decision to delay the abolition of duty-free in Europe.

However, perhaps this could point to a compromise solution, satisfying those very many consumers who wish to retain duty-free sales, those governments - fearing job losses - that have lobbied the European Commission to propose a delay in abolishing duty free, and also the Commission itself, for which duty-free is an obvious distortion of the single market.

Simply, duty-free on tobacco and alcohol products could be abolished on schedule, while a temporary delay is granted for other goods. Such a compromise has the attraction of giving some substance to the European Union's commitment to improving public health and ensuring health protection across the range of EU policies. It would also demonstrate that Europe is capable of finding pragmatic solutions that benefit its citizens, while not compromising significantly the basic tenets of the single market.

David Barnshaw,  
164 rue Victor Hugo,  
Brussels,  
Belgium

## Understanding value of art

From Mr Alexander P. Künzle.

Sir, Andrew Clark's very individual article about the nature and value of the arts is a masterpiece of intelligent journalism ("Swansong for the century", Global Arts, FT Weekend January 9-10).

Maybe this is Anglo-Saxon pragmatism; maybe it is the proof of Mr Clark's being close to the everyday economy; but he clearly makes us, from the business community, understand

what art is all about.

As art is frequently described by very, very academic authors, I first hesitated to read that long article. But I quickly changed my mind when I saw that Mr Clark also distinguishes well between commerce, necessity, markets and the limits of demand driven arts or services.

Everyone responsible for sponsoring arts or culture; every marketing manager with cultural budget power; every promotion

professional; every communication manager who brings his chief executive closer to culture and arts producers; every advertising person should read this key text once, or even twice, before going on with his activities.

Alexander P. Künzle,  
senior editor,  
Hotel & Tourism Review,  
3006 Berner,  
Switzerland

## Venice project will solve problem of flood and decay

From Mr Torben Sørensen.

Sir, Thank you for the excellent article by Paul Betts on the problems of Venice and its lagoon ("Rising tide of defiance", FT Weekend January 30-31). Having been personally involved with these problems for more than 10 years, I am happy to observe that the article was very informative and correct in its reporting.

Mr Betts correctly relates the criticism of the Mose project raised by the Italian minister of the environment, stating that the project might seriously damage the lagoon's fragile eco-system and seriously interfere with maritime traffic.

However, this should be seen in light of the fact that under present conditions the gates would be open for free water exchange and vessel traffic during 99.5 per cent of the time, while after a 30cm rise in sea level - if and when that occurs -

the gates will be open 97 per cent of the time. The lagoon will not turn into a lake or a "stagnant mire", and the port will not have to be shut down.

Moreover, the probability of a repetition of the disastrous 1986 flooding may be in the order of 0.5 per cent, but it could happen next year - as well as in 200 years.

The Mose project does not solve the pollution problems of the lagoon, and nobody pretends that it would. It will solve the problem of flooding of the city, and the innumerable abandoned and decaying ground floors of magnificent buildings in the city are ample illustration of the desperate need to solve this problem.

Torben Sørensen,  
former managing director,  
Danish Hydraulic Institute,  
Agerø Allé 5,  
DK-2970 Hørsholm,  
Denmark

## Vindication of the 'no' voters

From Mr Denzil Davies MP.

Sir, Your editorial "Heads in the euro-sand" (February 6-7) comes as a pleasant surprise to those of us who argued and voted against the Maastricht Treaty. By questioning whether the price stability objective should be "imposed on continental Europe" you are close to rejecting the core economic tenet of that Treaty.

Economic objectives such as price stability may well be desirable in certain circumstances, especially when there is high inflation. But circumstances change and economic tenets should not be entrenched as fundamental law into treaties, creating, as Maastricht does, an inflexible "economic constitution" that can only be modified or repealed with the agreement of 15 individual nations.

Denzil Davies,  
House of Commons,  
London SW1A 0AA, UK

## OFEX SHOW 1999

FREE ENTRY

Sponsored by:

FINANCIAL TIMES

Bloomberg

MARKET TALK

BY PAPERMAN

BY PAPERMAN

BY PAPERMAN

BY PAPERMAN

BY PAPERMAN

BY PAPERMAN

BY PAPERMAN

BY PAPERMAN

## First ever OFEX Show in the City of London

10.00-18.00hrs, 18th February 1999  
Hall 1, Barbican Centre, London EC2

Meet the managers of successful OFEX companies on a face to face basis. Hear about their business and future plans.

## Exhibiting companies

COMPANY	SECTOR
A1Office Assistant plc	Support Systems
Aimed ATM plc	Telecommunications
Applan Traffic Technologies plc	Electronics
Astrington Group plc	Support Services
Conroy Diamonds & Gold plc	Extractive Industries
Coronation International	Extractive Industries
Mining Corporation plc	Property
Cygnat Properties & Leisure plc	Support Services
Easyscreen plc	Electronic & Electrical Equipment
DPA-Egami plc	Media (Technology)
Electronic Fundraising Company plc	Diversified Industries
Environmental Polymers Group plc	Electronic & Electrical Equipment
Field Systems Designs Holdings plc	Diversified Industries (Agriculture)
Genus plc	Transport
Granville Shipping plc	Electronic & Electrical Equipment
Harland Simon plc	Food Products
H.O. Group Enterprises Ltd	Electronic & Electrical Equipment
Mutual Systems Ltd	Leisure & Hotels
Netbet UK plc	Media (Music Entertainment)
Ritz Music Group plc	Breweries, pubs & restaurants
Shepherd Neame Ltd	Electronic & Electrical Equipment
Spectrum Technologies plc	Breweries, pubs & restaurants
Soup Works plc	Support Services
Talbox Group (The) plc	Diversified Industries
TEG Environmental plc	Support Services
Test 100 Group plc	Transport
White Horse Fast Ferries Holdings plc	Engineering
Zepco plc	

To benefit from this first and exclusive offer to private investors, you must register in advance. To ensure your entry to the show, please fill in the reply slip below.

PLEASE PRINT IN CAPITALS

Name

Company

Address

Address

Address

Address

Address

Address

Address

Address

Address

Address

Address

Address

To ensure your entry to the show, post this reply slip to:

Imperator Financial Conferences  
Mercury House,  
Triton Court,  
14 Finsbury Square,  
London, EC2A 1BR

Fridge full

John Williams

John Williams

John Williams

John Williams

John Williams

John Williams

John Williams

John Williams

John Williams

John Williams

John Williams

John Williams

John Williams

John Williams

John Williams

John Williams

John Williams

John Williams

John Williams

John Williams

John Williams



# Pill of the century

It was once dubbed worthless by a drugs chief yet was a must for Apollo astronauts. Now, on its 100th anniversary, aspirin is swallowed by millions but faces stiff competition, writes David Pilling

The man in the street today lives more easily, more comfortably and more safely than the potentate in the past. It matters little to him that he is no richer than his neighbour if the world around him is rich enough to provide him with roads, railroads, hotels, a telephone system, physical well-being and aspirin - José Ortega y Gasset, *Revolutions of the Masses*, 1931

The 20th century was only three decades old when Ortega y Gasset pronounced it "the age of the aspirin". Now, as the century draws to a close, bringing with it the 100th anniversary of the little tablet, it is clear the Spanish philosopher had hit upon something profound.

Not only does aspirin crop up over and over in literature and popular culture, but it regularly makes an appearance at crucial points in modern history.

It was there at the birth of the pharmaceutical industry in 1899 when Bayer, then a German dye-stuffs company, realised there were vast sums to be made from healing common ailments.

It was there in the text of the Treaty of Versailles when the allies appropriated the Bayer trademark - and with it aspirin - as part of first world war reparations.

It was even there during the Apollo 11 moon mission in 1969, when Dr Charles Berry, NASA's medical director, made it part of every astronaut's medical kit, declaring it would "be used for ever as a standard remedy".

Aspirin - or acetylsalicylic acid as the active ingredient is called (ASA for short) - nearly fell at the first hurdle. Formulated for the first time by Felix Hoffmann, a 28-year-old German pharmaceutical graduate, it was rejected by the head of Bayer's Pharmacological Institute.

Like a movie mogul turning down Marilyn Monroe for being too plump, the drugs chief, Hein-

rich Dresser, described aspirin as "typical Berlin hot air. The product is worthless".

At the time, Bayer was more animated by another compound Hoffmann had synthesised, diacetylmorphine. Because that drug, which was being promoted as a cough remedy, was said to make factory workers feel "heroic", Bayer decided to call it by an appropriate name: heroin. (Until its side effects became apparent, heroin was used as a premedication for wounded soldiers in the first world war.)

Bayer's chairman eventually intervened on aspirin's behalf after seeing the results of Berlin laboratory tests. Although the Berlin patent office rejected the company's patent application on the grounds that it was too similar to previous compounds, Bayer registered the Aspirin trademark.

The name was derived from the "a" of acetyl and "spirin" from *Spirea ulmaria*, the meadowsweet plant from which the active ingredient can be extracted.

The properties of salicylic acid had in fact been known for thousands of years. The Ebers papyrus, a collection of medicinal recipes dating back 3,600 years, proves that Egyptian physicians prescribed an infusion of myrtle leaves - which contain the stuff - for back pain.

Hippocrates of Kos recommended juice from the bark of a willow tree, yet another natural source of aspirin's active ingredient, for fever and pain.

The bark's beneficial properties were rediscovered by the Reverend Edward Stone of Chipping Norton, Oxfordshire, who in 1763 conducted the world's first clinical

trial when he administered willow extract to 50 feverish patients.

Hoffmann's achievement was to make a relatively minor chemical modification that made salicylic acid more stable and reduced its bitter taste. This was done, so the story goes, to make it more palatable to Hoffmann's rheumatic father. The principal use of the compound, it was then thought, was as an anti-inflammatory.

According to Walter Snieder, senior lecturer in pharmaceutical sciences at the University of Southampton, that story does not stack up.

The real inventor of aspirin, says Mr Snieder, was not Hoff-

mann but the 20th century mingles scientific progress with horror, that the same company should both ease and terminate so many lives.

When IG Farben was broken up after the war, Bayer resumed the marketing onslaught that had taken aspirin to virtually every corner of the globe. On aspirin's launch, Bayer had been quick to grasp the power of brand promotion when it circulated a letter to 30,000 doctors in one of history's first mail shots.

Aspirin, originally weighed out in grammes of powder by pharmacists, was also one of the first pharmaceuticals to be sold in tablet form. In this way, Bayer could ensure an appropriate dosage and help combat counterfeiters who regularly cut pure aspirin with other substances.

By the 1960s, aspirin was used by the public mainly as an analgesic and antipyretic for headaches and the aches and fevers associated with flu. It was evidence of how crude the pharmaceutical industry still was that scientists could not explain how salicylic acid, in use for 8,600 years, actually worked. As recently as 1969, the *New York Times* magazine was calling aspirin "the wonder drug that nobody understands".

The mystery was solved, at least partially, in the 1970s by Professor John Vane, using advances in molecular biology. Sir John, who won a Nobel prize for his work, discovered that aspirin blocks production of an enzyme which inhibits the synthesis of fatty acids known as prostaglandins. Without prostaglandins, the body is unable to produce symptoms of pain, fever and inflammation.

Sir John's unmasking of aspirin's secrets helped give a new lease of life to a product that had been coming under attack from rival drugs such as ibuprofen. (Aspirin, particularly if taken over a long period, can cause stomach bleeding and ulcers.)

It turns out that the enzyme that aspirin blocks is involved in activating a substance that enables blood platelets to form into clots. That is why small but regular doses of aspirin have since been shown to reduce the risk of strokes and heart attacks.

As with much of aspirin's history, there was a twist to this episode. Years before, in 1850, Lawrence Craven, a Californian throat surgeon, had noticed that patients who took aspirin as a painkiller bled more after tonsillectomies.

Having tested it as an anticoagulant in 400 middle-aged patients, he published his findings in the *Mississippi Valley Medical Journal*. No one took any notice of his claims that aspirin could reduce the risk of heart attacks. A year later, Dr Craven died in obscurity - of a heart attack.

Even now, the last chapters of aspirin's history are yet to be written. It again finds itself under

attack from other drugs, this time from a new class of product called Cox-2 inhibitors, the invention of Monsanto and Merck of the US. Cox-2s target cyclooxygenase-2, which controls pain and inflammation, without blocking the virtually identical cyclooxygenase-1, which protects the stomach lining.

The so-called "super-aspirins", which go on sale this year, are expected to notch up sales of



\$50n (£30n) between them within a few years, dwarfing the amount earned by aspirin (Bayer sold DM10n worth last year).

But aspirin's days are far from over. For a start, Cox-2s, which sell for dollars compared with aspirin's cents, do not have the anti-blood clotting properties of salicylic acid. And extensive trials are being conducted to prove what many doctors already believe: that aspirin can reduce

the likelihood of cancer, particularly of the colon. These findings have helped expand aspirin's sales. Humanity now swallows 10bn tablets each year.

In that respect, Ortega y Gasset was right. This century truly has been the age of the aspirin. But in another, he got it wrong.

With or without aspirin, for pauper and potentate alike, the 20th century has been anything but painless.

## An uncontrolled experiment

Unlike the BSE beef scare, UK politicians and consumer groups are listening to the minority opposing the genetic modification of food, writes Clive Cookson and Vanessa Houlder

Might genetically modified foods become the next mad-cow crisis? Plants with altered genes are already pervasive in the food chain (see below). The view of mainstream scientists is clear: genetically modified foods that have been approved for human consumption are extremely unlikely to damage your health.

But the scientific wisdom was just as clear 10 years ago about mad-cow disease: the risk of BSE infecting people was negligible. The few maverick scientists, who warned that the infection might cross the species barrier from cattle into people, were attacked as irresponsible and received little attention. Unfortunately, they have turned out to be right.

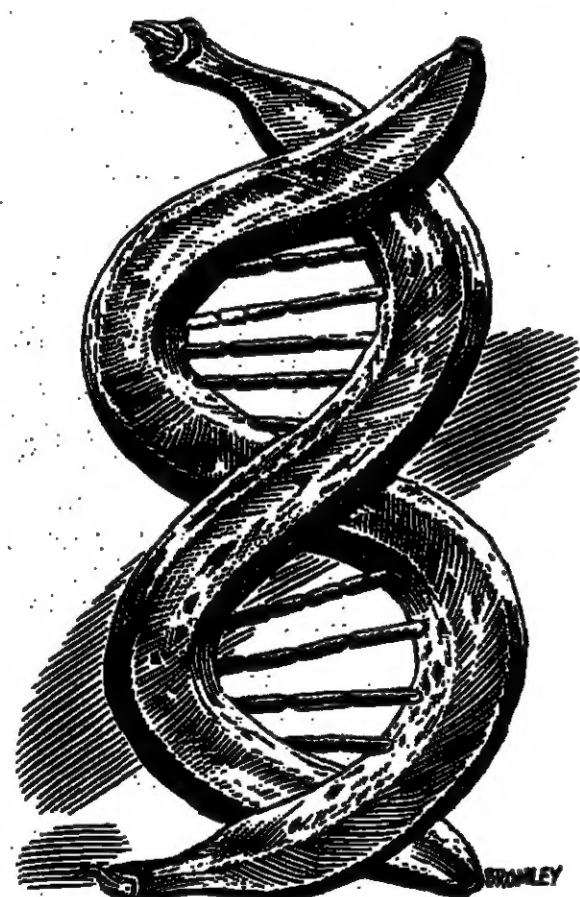
The spectre of BSE haunts the current debate over genetic foods. Again, the vast majority of scientists pooch-pooch the view that eating genetically modified crops could pose any threat.

But this time consumer groups and politicians are listening to the minority who claim that added genes and the proteins they produce could pose a danger both to the environment and to human health.

"BSE has made people in Europe very sensitive to new technologies in the food supply industry, and very wary of scientists and government," says John Durant, professor of public understanding of science at Imperial College, London.

"It could be that the price of the BSE fiasco will be even greater outside the beef industry than inside it, if it makes the European public resist GM crops."

Public concern intensified yesterday after 20 international scientists signed a memorandum in support of



controversial research that showed rats fed with an experimental kind of genetically modified potato suffered damage to their immune systems and changes to the size of their livers, hearts and brains.

Some of the findings were rapidly discredited by the institute where the work was carried out, the Rowett Research Institute in Aberdeen. It described the presentation of the work as "misleading" and asked Arpad Pusztai, the scientist involved, to retire.

The scientists who this week rallied round Dr Pusztai say his concerns are justified. Stanley Ewen, a pathologist at Aberdeen Uni-

versity medical school, says the work might even have disturbing implications for modified crops already in use, such as maize. Vyrvan Howard, toxicopathologist at Liverpool University, says growth retardation in young rats at the Rowett has serious implications, since underweight babies might show behavioural problems.

The researchers challenge the adequacy of the existing regulatory system in the UK and, by extension, the rest of the world. Dr Howard says: "The regulatory process needs to be more thorough, more objective and to ask the right questions." He, and other scientists, are calling for a moratorium on the use

of genetically modified foods.

However, the fact is that such concerns remain, at the moment, those of a minority. Other scientists vigorously defend the existing system which, they say, involves detailed, case-by-case studies, including feeding trials where necessary.

Professor Derek Burke, a biologist and former chairman of the UK government's advisory committee on novel foods, is "absolutely confident" about the safeguards in the existing system. The suggestion that the findings have any implications for existing GM crops is "absolute rubbish", he says. There was never any question that the particular genetic modification in the Rowett experiment - the potato contained a toxin - would enter the human food chain.

Lastly, he claims, the British regulatory system is more safety-conscious than that of the US. "On medicine and drugs, we are more relaxed. On food it is the other way round. It's a different attitude to risk."

One reason why the Europeans may be risk averse is widespread ignorance both of how much genetically modified food there is and what has been done to the plants. While genetically modified plants are restricted in Europe to experimental field trials, commercial crops are marching across the fields of north and south America and east Asia, facing little consumer or political resistance.

Soya and maize are leading the way. The main modifications introduced so far enable plants either to kill insect pests or to resist a specific herbicide (so the farmer can spray the field with it to kill all the weeds without harming the crop).

Apart from the uncertainty over the facts, another barrier has arisen to public acceptance: all the benefits

so far seem to have accrued to the farmers and the companies supplying them, while all the risks are born by consumers and the environment. More obvious public benefits - improved food qualities and gigantic improvements in productivity - remain promises.

Large-scale public surveys, such as those conducted by Prof Durant at Imperial College with George Gaskell at the London School of Economics, consistently show far more consumer opposition to genetically modified food in Europe than in North America.

But the contrary is true of medical biotechnology: more Americans than Europeans express opposition to genetic testing. "We should avoid the stereotyped view that Americans are gungho about new technology and Europeans are not," Prof Durant says.

Besides BSE, which has not affected the US, he cites the very different views of agriculture on opposite sides of the Atlantic. "When Europeans think of wildlife and the rural environment, they think of farmland, and for them GM technology appears to be the next step in an unwelcome intensification of agriculture," he says. "Americans, in contrast, think of the wilderness areas in their national parks; they regard farmland as part of the industrial system."

Whether the European concern or the American enthusiasm for crop engineering is more justified may not become clear for decades. Dr Howard says it will be extremely difficult to monitor the public for ill effects from GM food.

"Maybe, after 20 to 30 years, things might come to the fore," he says. "But you won't have any unexpected population groups which to measure it. It is an uncontrolled experiment."

## Open skies land politicians with airport dilemma

The world is running out of runway space as air passenger numbers soar. Michael Skapinker considers possible solutions

There is no need to stay at home this weekend. For as little as £21.50 (£30), EasyJet will fly you from Amsterdam to London. Ryanair will take you from Paris to Dublin for £7.42 (£7.72).

If you'd like to venture further, travel agents are touting return tickets from London to New York for £165. For £507 you can fly around the world via Bangkok, Sydney and Los Angeles.

Deregulation of the European and US airline industries, and increased competition from low-cost airlines, means it has never been so cheap to fly. British Airways calculates that international fares have fallen 2.5 per cent a year in real terms since the 1970s.

Passengers have responded. About 1.5bn people flew on scheduled services worldwide last year, a 50 per cent increase on 1987. Hundreds of millions more are ready to take to the air.

Passenger numbers are expected to rise 5 per cent annually over the next 20 years. Airlines will have to try more than 17,000 aircraft to accommodate them.

There is just one problem. Where will all these aircraft land? New airports opened last year in Hong Kong, Kuala Lumpur and Milan. But international airports, particularly in Europe, are severely congested. And attempts to build new airports, terminals or runways have attracted furious opposition from local residents, who have delayed their construction for years.

Next month, for example, Roy Vandemeer QC is expected to declare an end to the public hearings into a proposed fifth terminal at London's Heathrow airport, which is strongly opposed by environmental groups and local authorities.

By the time it ends, the inquiry, the longest in UK history, will have been sitting for almost four years. It will have heard evidence from 800 witnesses. According to the computerised transcription system, they and the lawyers will have spoken 35m words. About 25,000 people have made written submissions, mostly opposing Terminal Five.

Mr Vandemeer will spend two years considering his recommendation to the UK government. BAA, which owns Heathrow, does not expect the terminal to open before 2007.

Heathrow is not planning to build its new Heathrow terminal on greenfield land. The proposed site is a former sewage farm. If this is the

protest a building on contaminated land attracts, what sort of uproar would greet a proposal to build a runway, or an entirely new airport, in London or the surrounding countryside?

"It's virtually unthinkable," says Philippe Hamon, director-general of the European division of Airports Council International, which represents the world's airports.

Yet London's four international runways - two at Heathrow and one each at Gatwick and Stansted airports - are expected to be filled to bursting by 2020. BAA, which owns all three airports, insists the government must decide what happens next. The decision is too important for a private company to make. The government has promised to begin consulting on a 30-year airport plan after it receives the Terminal Five report.

Long delays to airport projects are not unique to the UK. Munich's new airport

was a tiny island, augmented by 2,000 acres of reclaimed land.

London could have had its own off-shore airport. But plans to build one at Maplin, off the Essex coast, were cancelled in 1974. "That decision was a classic failure of long-term thinking," says Desmond Cox, chairman of the Heathrow Association for the Control of Airport Noise and a leader of the anti-Terminal Five campaign.

Although offshore airports do not disturb mainlanders' sleep, they do have an environmental effect, disturbing marine and bird life. But the real obstacle is cost. Chalk Lap Kok, along with its associated expressways, tunnels and high-speed rail link, cost HK\$155.3bn. The Dutch government says moving Schiphol offshore could cost up to £145bn (£19bn). Building Heathrow's Terminal Five is expected to cost £1.8bn.

In the meantime, airports are having to make more of their existing capacity. Heathrow last year squeezed more than 60m passengers through its four terminals, compared with 51m in 1994. Rigas Kostas, visiting professor at the Cranfield College of Aeronautics, says Europe could make more use of its regional airports.

Ryanair, the Dublin-based low-fares carrier, prides itself on its ability to find under-used airports with low landing charges. Its Brussels flights go to Charleroi airport, 35 miles south of the city. In Paris, it uses Beauvais airport, rather than Charles de Gaulle or Orly. This week it said it would fly to Hahn airport, 110km from Frankfurt.

Mr Cox argues that the solution to congested airports is higher fares. "Flying for £40 to most of Europe from Stansted is not realistic," he says. "People are going to have to pay realistic prices. The environmental cost has got to be reflected in the price. At the moment, people have a choice between going out to dinner or getting on a flight."

Mr Hamon rejects this view. Business travellers would pay the higher fares and leisure passengers would be forced to stay at home. "It's not a democratic solution," he says.

Instead, he argues, the industry needs to improve the case for building more airports, terminals and runways. Not enough has been made of the employment airports generate, for example.

"As an industry, we're going to have to do a far better job of taking the public with us," even if it means taking them to islands in the middle of the North Sea.

## Fridge full of modified genes

John Willman reports on the vegetables, fruits and foods that life science groups have altered

A wide variety of genetically modified crops has been developed by the leading life sciences groups, ranging from potatoes and cauliflower to lettuce and raspberries. They offer benefits such as better insect resistance, tolerance to chemical spray, better nutritional content and longer shelf lives after harvesting.

Only four are in use in the UK food industry and two of these have relatively restricted applications.

One is the genetically modified enzyme used to make vegetarian cheese, replacing rennet which is extracted from calves' stomachs. It is now increasingly used in making hard

cheeses for general consumption.

The second is the genetically modified tomatoes used to make tomato paste. These tomatoes are less likely to rot on the plant and remain firmer after picking, producing a higher yield. As a result, the paste is cheaper and - according to Safeway, the supermarket

chain - scores higher in consumer taste tests.

The other two are soybeans and maize, both of which largely originate from the US. They are used much more widely - and in the case of soy is increasingly hard to find in a non-modified form. Soy is an ingredient in many products, including cakes and biscuits, chilled foods and

vegetarian textured meat products as well as soya sauce and cooking oil. It is used in about 60 per cent of processed foods.

Most of the soy used in the UK comes from the US where genetically modified crops made up about a third of the harvest last year and the share is rising rapidly. Bulk shipments routinely mix modified and non-modified, and any food product that may contain modified ingredients must be labelled as such in Europe.

Maize is also used as a basic ingredient in many food and drink products, including breakfast cereals, crisps and snacks, petfood and processed foods. It is also a source of fructose

used in soft drinks and confectionery. Europe is able to produce much of its maize needs so it is easier to keep GM grain out of the UK food chain.

Under EU rules, a food using any genetically modified ingredient must be labelled accordingly. The only exception is derivatives of soya that contain none of the protein - such as oil.

The real question, however, is whether food manufacturers always know whether GM ingredients are in their products. One food company - which does not want to be identified - found traces of genetic modification in 14 out of 20 products it believed to be GM-free.

Genetically modified products	Used in
Vegetarian cheese and other cheeses	
Tomato paste	
Chilled foods, cakes and biscuits, vegetarian textured meat products, processed foods	
Crisps and snacks, cereals, pet food, processed foods	



















### Authorised and Insurances

### Authorised and Insurances

هكذا من الأصل







## OFFSHORE AND OVERSEAS

**BERMUDA  
(REGULATED)(\*)**

**CAYMAN ISLANDS  
(REGULATED) (\*)**

## IRELAND

**WILLIAM B. BAKER**

# Nº 1

position worldwide.  
Thank you.

Eurex: powered by M.T.H.

Call free from Germany: 0800-123 1940,  
internat. ++353-1-670 19 55 or e-mail: mth@mth.ie.

**M.T.H.**  
Media Trading House  
Your Discount Broker

■

1998年12月

1000

55.01	5.27	+0.00	0.00	IRELAND
55.14		+0.00	0.00	(REGULATED) (*)
55.07	55.55	+0.00	0.00	
55.05		+0.00	0.00	
55.11	5.58	+0.00	0.00	

**ISLE OF MAN**  
(ESA RECOGNISED)

**ISLE OF MAN  
(REGULATED)<sup>(122)</sup>**

**JERSEY**  
(ESA RECOGNISED)



## Offshore Funds and Insurances

● FT Cyteline Unit Trust Prices are available over the telephone. Call the FT Cyteline Help Desk on 1-844-1771-823-4378 for more details.

**FT MANAGED FUNDS SERVICE**[illegible]



### Offshore Insurances and Other Funds

[illegible][illegible]

STATE STREET

**Serving Institutional Investors Worldwide**

[illegible]























## COMPANIES &amp; FINANCE

## BANKING GROUP SPELLS OUT CRITERIA FOR ACQUISITIONS

## Lloyds TSB upbeat on UK economy

By Clay Harris

Lloyds TSB Group gave bank shares a boost yesterday by reporting strong results for 1998 and a sanguine outlook for the UK economy.

The bank reported a 14 per cent increase in pre-tax profits from continuing businesses, raised its annual dividend by 29 per cent, and emphasised its high standards for considering any takeovers.

Lloyds TSB shares rose nearly 9 per cent, cementing its position as Europe's largest bank by market value.

Other bank shares also rose to close a week in which Barclays found a new chief executive and speculation continued about consolidation in the sector.

On the UK economy, Sir Brian Pittman, chairman, said: "I think we should see a soft landing. It is, I think, different this time."

The bank, which relies on the UK for more than 90 per cent of its profits, had seen no sign of a downturn in the second half. Sir Brian said small businesses should be cushioned because more had taken out longer-term finance and fixed-rate loans.

Because of its size and highly rated shares, Lloyds TSB has few limits on the takeover targets it could consider. But Sir Brian said any deal would have to meet several criteria, including fitting the strategy and expertise of the group, which includes Cheltenham & Gloucester in mortgages and Abbey Life in insurance.

"We are not interested in portfolio investment," he said. "We are not interested in getting bigger for its own sake." He added: "Most deals, in our experience, are killed by the premium required, which simply can-

not be recaptured." It would also steer clear of an apparent bargain, which "usually means it's a dud."

Peter Ellwood, group chief executive, said: "We've run our slide rule over most of the institutions in the UK." The bank had also looked widely in continental Europe, where tougher labour laws limited the cost benefits to be achieved.

Mr Ellwood acknowledged that potential partners in other UK mergers might look over their shoulder at a possible intervention from Lloyds TSB, but said: "We certainly wouldn't spoil a

party if the deal we would get into would hurt shareholder value."

Although pre-tax profits from continuing businesses rose to £2,295m (£5,395m) against £2,895m, overall profits fell by 5 per cent to £3,025m (£3,165m). This largely reflected a £400m provision for pensions mis-selling, announced with the half-year figures.

Lloyds TSB shares closed 68p higher at 852.5p. Barclays added 96p to £15.16, and National Westminster Bank rose 72p to £12.27.

Lex, Page 24

## Single branding planned for the bigger black horse

Christopher Brown-Humes and Clay Harris on the next steps for the merged Lloyds TSB

Lloyds TSB Group yesterday signalled that it would be able to achieve more than the £400m it originally promised in annual cost savings from merging with TSB.

It also ruled out returning surplus capital to shareholders via a buy-back. Sir Brian Pittman, chairman, said: "So long as we can earn a higher return on growing shareholder funds, we would not contemplate a buy-back." The only exception would be if there was a sharp fall in the bank's share price, he said.

Lloyds TSB had achieved annual cost savings of £351m from the TSB merger by the end of last year and said it would meet its £400m target by the end of 1999. It is aiming to achieve even more from 2000 onwards.

It plans to have a single brand for all its branches by mid-1999. It has closed 360 branches since the merger, including 140 last year. Peter

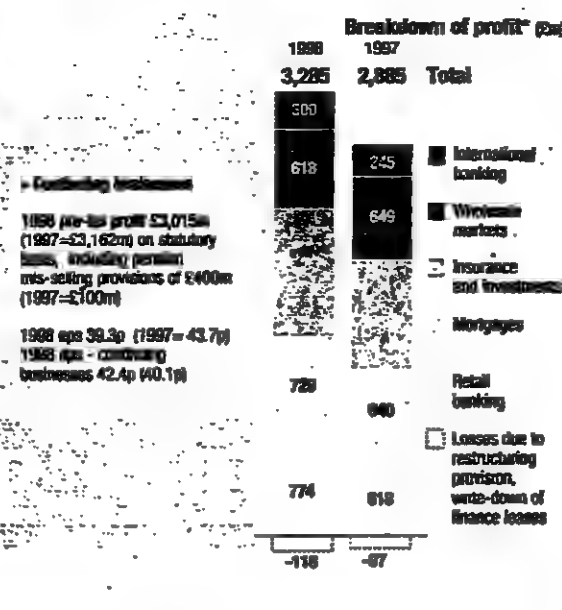
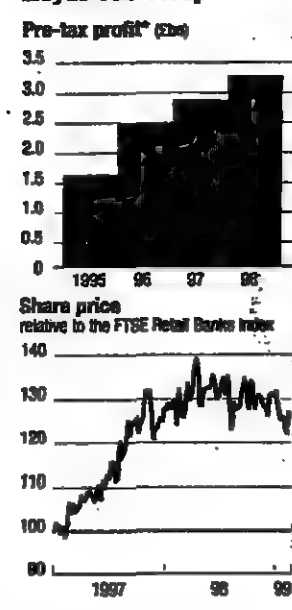
Ellwood, group chief executive, noted that with 2,530 branches, the bank still had 600 more of them than its nearest competitor.

Sir Brian said prospects for consolidation for UK financial services were "more auspicious" than they had been six months previously, because weaker participants were experiencing slower profit growth and were more realistic about their future in a climate of intense competition. "For me the question is not whether industry restructuring is necessary, but how it is to be achieved," he said.

Operating expenses fell 2 per cent, and costs accounted for 46.6 per cent of income, against 49 per cent before. "Our aim is to get it significantly lower," Sir Brian said.

The domestic net interest margin rose 11 basis points to 3.96 per cent. Bad debt provisions in the UK crept up from 0.41 per cent to 0.44

Lloyds TSB Group



per cent of lending. "For those of us who can remember the days of boom and bust, this looks like a fairly modest charge," Sir Brian said.

In the mortgage market, the Cheltenham & Gloucester subsidiary took 11.3 per cent of net new lending, putting it alongside Nationwide building society as one of the best performers last year. C&G's traditional market share is just above 9 per cent.

One disappointment was

the performance of the Abbey Life insurance subsidiary where profits fell from £202m to £158m on a 18 per cent decline in sales.

"It's not the brightest star we've got," Mr Ellwood said, although Abbey's performance had picked up towards the year-end and new business was being written at a profit.

Abbey Life made a £114m provision to cover its liabilities for annuity guarantees given between the mid-1990s and mid-1998. This was

caused by the fall in bond yields last year, and is an issue facing the entire pensions industry.

The provision was balanced by a £123m credit relating to a fall in the discount rate applied to Abbey's life businesses.

The group's post-tax return on equity fell from 38.1 per cent to 32.9 per cent.

A recommended final dividend of 15.5p (11.5p) will increase the total to 22.2p (17.2p).

## Top managers to go in M&amp;S reorganisation

By Peggy Hollinger

Marks and Spencer is expected to cut up to a fifth of its senior management jobs as part of a restructuring to be finalised in the coming weeks.

It is understood that up to 200 of the UK's biggest clothing retailers' 1,000 managers are to likely go from its Baker Street head office, including some departures at main board level.

The job cuts follow last month's surprise profits warning and news of a sharp drop in trading over the Christmas period. It is expected M&S will publish details of the restructuring in advance of meetings with institutional investors in March.

Most of the job losses will affect the 120 senior managers at the divisional director and executive level.

M&S employs some 4,000 people in its London headquarters and 70,000 in total. Mr Peter Salsbury, appointed chief executive last November, acknowledged in an interview in January that head office had to be streamlined to speed up decision-making and improve the group's flexibility.

He also hinted at a far

greater number of job losses than 200. Referring to the 800 cuts made in 1991, he noted they had all crept back into the business: "We did it once and we need to do it again."

There will also be job losses among managerial staff in continental Europe, where M&S has performed particularly poorly. The UK job cuts are not expected to affect shop floor staff.

M&S refused to comment on the restructuring. But insiders suggested that the final number of departures could be far greater than 200 when the redundancy programme was complete.

"Eight years ago, the last time M&S had a cull, the target was 400 and 700 went. The way it was done encouraged voluntary redundancies with very fat packages," one said. "And Peter Salsbury (then personnel director) ran that programme."

Analysts speculated that the cuts could save M&S up to £20m a year. But more important was the impact that streamlining M&S's top heavy management structure would have on its culture. Many of M&S's current problems have been blamed on a bureaucratic and highly centralised corporate structure which has left it detached from its customers.

## Electra board split over £1.2bn approach from 3i

By Katherine Campbell

A split has appeared in the board of Electra Investment Trust as it seeks alternatives to a £1.2bn bid approach from 3i, its latest venture capitalist rival.

Brian Williamson, chairman of Life, who had been due to take over the trust's chairmanship from Michael Stoddart after next week's annual meeting, is understood to be among the EIT directors who had insisted on aggressive terms for the resumption of stalled talks with 3i - including the signing of a confidentiality agreement.

Electra has been trying to flush out a white knight and is also thought to be preparing a proposal to put before shareholders at Wednesday's AGM that may involve returning cash by realising the trust's portfolio over a period of years.

For Mr Stoddart, who this week announced he would stay on until the future of the company was "resolved", a deal with 3i would be a fitting coda to a long distinguished career in UK venture capital.

But executives at Electra Fleming, which manages the trust, have balked at the idea of joining 3i. Mr Williamson, whose chances of taking the EIT chairmanship dwindled once it became clear its days were numbered, was also a director of Electra Fleming Holdings until last December.

Two other directors still sit on both boards - Ronald Armstrong, chief executive of the Penn consulting group, and Peter Williams, chief executive of David S Smith, the paper and packaging group.

Electra said: "There is discussion about points of substance but those could not

be interpreted as differences of opinion. All the non-executives [of EIT] have been actively involved in reviewing all the options."

3i appears to be playing a waiting game ahead of the annual meeting. However, the group, which was proposing a mixture of shares and cash in its indicative offer, has seen its own shares dip recently. Yesterday they rose 11p to 607.5p.

David Erskine, investment director at Standard Life Investments, a shareholder in Electra, said the remuneration structure for Electra Fleming executives would have to change in the event of any wind-up. "It would have to be linked to a certain yearly internal rate of return to shareholders - to ensure they don't dispose of the assets at a huge discount, just to get it all done."

Lex, Page 24

## RESULTS

	Turnover (£m)	Pre-tax profit (£m)	EPS (p)	Current dividend (p)	Date of payment	Dividends corresponding dividend	Total for year	Total for year
AAF Inds	6 mths to Dec 31	17.1 (15.9)	1.05 (0.943)	7.2 (2.3)	0.8	May 4	-	all
Bliss	6 mths to Oct 31	183.7 (221)	1.82 (1.28)	0.8 (0.7)	15.5	May 9	11.9	22.2
Lloyds TSB	Yr to Dec 31	1,526 (2,288)	56.6 (38.4)	39.3 (29.55)	0.8	May 14	6.3	6
London Fidelity	Yr to Dec 31	21.8 (21)	2.98 (2.28)	0.8 (0.8)	1.8	May 14	2.8	2.8
Torax	Yr to Dec 31	120.4 (147.4)	0.002 (0.005)	0.01 (0.25)	-	-	-	-

Earnings shown basic. Dividends shown net. Figures in brackets are for corresponding period. \*After exceptional charge. \*After exceptional credit. \*At April 30.

## BA to take 9% of Iberia for £200m

By Michael Stapleton in London and David White in Madrid

British Airways yesterday announced it would buy a 9 per cent stake in Iberia of Spain for about £200m. American Airlines will take a further 1 per cent.

The deal, which follows lengthy negotiations, is conditional on Iberia being fully privatised this year. Sept, the Spanish state holding company which owns 96 per cent of the airline to institutional investors, followed by a public offering of the remaining shares later this year. The Spanish government will keep "golden share" rights.

BA began discussing taking an equity stake in Iberia in 1997, but the deal was held up by a range of problems, which have now been resolved.

BA is understood to have received assurances that Xabier de Irujo, Iberia's chairman, will remain in his post. Robert Ayling, BA's chief executive, had expressed admiration for Mr Irujo's management abilities and said the investment could not go ahead without him.

BA is also understood to have reached agreement that it will pay no more for its shares than Spanish shareholders do in the public offering. This means the price could be lower than £200m and will not be higher than £215m. The final price will also depend on the eventual value of Iberia's investment in Amadeus, the computer reservations system. Amadeus, in which Iberia holds a 29 per cent stake, is planning a public offering.

Discussions about the extent of BA's influence over Iberia's management are also understood to have delayed the deal. They have agreed BA will appoint two directors to Iberia's 12-member board and be represented on all board sub-committees.

BA and Iberia will code-share on flights beyond the UK and Spain. Iberia already has a code sharing agreement with American. Code sharing allows airlines to sell seats on each other's flights. BA and American have agreed to hold their stakes for at least three years.

Iberia is also to join One-world, the airline alliance headed by BA and American. The other members are Cathay Pacific, the Hong Kong-based carrier, Qantas of Australia, Canadian Airlines and Finnair. Iberia's membership of the alliance will be ratified by a meeting of One-world chief executives in Sydney on Monday. "BA together with Iberia is clearly now the number one in Europe," Mr Ayling said, putting the two groups' combined EU market share at about 26 per cent.

He said the airline's development in future "must be through profitable investments and alliances."

BA, which initially sought a controlling stake, is satisfied it will have "significant influence" in management decisions.

Warburg Dillon Read acted as adviser to BA on the deal.

## NEWS DIGEST

## ENGINEERING

## BAe 'puzzled' at talk of Royal Ordnance sale

British Aerospace reacted with surprise yesterday to a suggestion by Hans Brauner, chief executive of Rheinmetall, that the two companies were close to an agreement about the future of BAe's Royal Ordnance munitions business. BAe was understood to be puzzled by reports that Mr Brauner had talked about buying the subsidiary, which is thought to be suffering substantial losses.

The two companies have for the last year been in talks aimed at an agreement to run Royal Ordnance as a joint venture.

Mr Brauner said on Thursday night that his company envisaged making various acquisitions this year and that it would soon come to an agreement with BAe. But he did not specify whether he meant that Rheinmetall wanted to buy Royal Ordnance, which was acquired by BAe in 1987 and has since been forced by tough international competition and falling orders to cut its workforce by about 80 per cent.

BAe said it was still awaiting a proposal from the German company. It is understood that talks were not progressing. BAe hopes to decide the fate of Royal Ordnance within six months. Its shares closed 14.1p lower at 425.5p. Michael Peel in London and Tony Barber in Frankfurt

## Flowserve cools on Weir

Flowserve, the US maker of pumps, seals and valves, is thought unlikely to renew its interest in Weir Group, the Glasgow-based engineer that last week rebuffed its takeover approach. Shareholders in Weir backed the group's robust dismissal of Flowserve's indicative £800m (£994m) bid. Weir, which has a market capitalisation of £518m, said the price failed by a wide margin to reflect the value of the group.

Flowserve, which declined to comment last night, is understood to have been surprised by Weir's decision to make public what it saw as a tentative and friendly approach. It is thought to be seeking alternative acquisitions to allow it to participate in consolidation in the world engineering business. Institutional investors in Weir said the group had been wise to reject the approach, as it would have left Flowserve's balance sheet looking stretched.

Sir Ron Garrick, chairman and chief executive of Weir, said the group had not heard from Flowserve since the announcement last Friday. He said it would be sensible for Flowserve to give up, as the acquisition would have left its interest cover too low. Analysts said Weir had become vulnerable to a bid partly because it had failed to make a big acquisition in the past four years. It is believed to have the capacity to spend about £200m.

Flowserve, which has a market capitalisation of about \$650m (£398m), announced this week that profits last year, excluding exceptional items, were flat at \$92m on turnover down 6 per cent at \$1.08bn. The company said it suffered from global economic problems, dramatically lower oil prices and weak chemical markets. Michael Peel

## SSAB suffers under falling prices

SSAB, the Swedish steel group, yesterday said its product prices fell 8 per cent in January compared with the fourth quarter of 1998, as the downturn in Asian consumption continued to hit prices in Europe.

Reporting a 25 per cent drop in pre-tax profits to SKr1,426m (£187m) for the year to December, the company said reduced steel consumption in Asia had changed the global flow of trade in steel. Exports to Asia by European producers decreased, while exports from Asian steel producers increased rapidly.

Sales rose from SKr17.5bn to SKr17.8bn, with earnings per share down from SKr10.40 to SKr8.20. An unchanged dividend of SKr4.50 is proposed.

SSAB said that, although raw material prices will probably fall significantly in 1999, they would not compensate for lower steel prices, so margins in steel operations are expected to weaken. Nicholas George, Stockholm

## TELECOMMUNICATIONS

## Equant seeks to raise \$3.6bn

Equant, which operates one of the world's most geographically extensive voice and data networks, is raising up to \$3.6bn through a secondary share offering. The shares were priced yesterday at \$74.

Just over 48m shares are on offer - including an over-allotment option - representing almost 24 per cent of the group's share capital. The total net proceeds will go to the selling shareholders Stichting (the Sita Foundation) and certain investment funds managed by Morgan Stanley Dean Witter Capital Partners.

The decision to set the price at the top end of the range further reinforces the values commanded by telecoms stocks at present.

Equant, formerly Sita Telecommunications Holdings, is registered in the Netherlands with principal offices in Amsterdam and in Atlanta, Georgia. It is listed on both the Paris and New York Stock Exchanges following its initial public offering in July 1998.

Morgan Stanley Dean Witter is global co-ordinator for the offering. The Lazard Houses are advisers to the Sita Foundation. Alan Cane

## CONSTRUCTION

## AAF trebled at £1.65m

AAF Industries, the system building and scaffolding group, made further progress in the six months to December 31, with pre-tax profits trebled from £543,000 to £1.65m. Turnover grew 7 per cent to £17.1m. Operating margins improved to nearly 10 per cent (4 per cent) as a result of productivity and cost reduction initiatives.

## Offtheshelfville

## or...GRANVILLE

If you prefer an investment bank which provides tailored solutions, come and talk to the people who help fast growing companies to grow even faster. Call Alex Winter on +44 171 488 1212.

Lead in Granville Market Ltd. is a subsidiary of the SFA and a member of the London Stock Exchange.

www.granville-plc.com

INDEPENDENT INVESTMENT BANKING

Corporate Finance  
Equity Raising  
or Sales  
Private Equity  
Asset Management  
Project Finance

Cuba

Monday March 1

Financial Times

London

Tel: +44 212 748 1345

Fax: +44 212 688 8257

Email: cuba@ft.com

Tel: +44 242 327 8794

Tel: +44 242 327 3416

FINANCIAL TIMES

16 FT 90 Column







## Argentina seeks \$6bn from IMF to cushion Brazil strife

### The Man Who in Russian Arms

Marco Tronchetti Provera, Pirelli chairman and chief executive, said last night it was expected to lead to Pirelli doubling its sales in North America while Cooper would

Mr Tronchetti Provera said the alliance had been in negotiation for almost a year and could not be seen as a reaction to recent merger moves. "It is purely an operating alliance based on the common interest

Cooper will manage the distribution and sales of all Pirelli car and light truck tyres in the US through a network of 5,000 dealers - the main element in its expectations of doubling its US production and market share from 2 per cent to 4 per cent.

*Additional reporting by Justine Newsome in Quito and Geoff Davis in São Paulo.*

by Michiya Matsumoto in Tokyo

It announced restructuring that will reduce domestic branches from 339 in March last year to 290 by March 2003. It will cut the workforce by

The public funds agreed so far will go towards recapitalising 15 of Japan's large banks. Tokyo Mitsubishi Bank, the biggest, aims to recapitalise

Mitsubishi group companies and Sumitomo Trust also said they had agreed to enter jointly the defined contribution pension business.

*Additional reporting by Justine Newsome in Quito and Geoff Davis in São Paulo.*

# Bill's back

policy and a staunch defender of free trade. Larry Summers, his probable successor and current deputy, would surely continue those policies. But the academic Mr Summers has yet to build the reputation for market savvy that has so helped his boss during a time of international financial turmoil.

The graph shows the Dow Jones Industrial Average from January 1997 to January 1998. The y-axis represents the index value, ranging from 6500 to 11500 in increments of 500. The x-axis shows the months from Jan to Dec for both 1997 and 1998. The index starts at approximately 8000 in Jan 1997, rises to a peak of about 11400 in late 1997, and then falls sharply to around 6800 in early 1998, before recovering to about 9000 by Jan 1998.

One solution would be a deal, particularly as Lloyds has such a good record on wringing out costs. The management raised this possibility yesterday by suggesting further UK consolidation was on the cards. But the reality is that deals are still some way off. The mortgage war is unlikely to yield casualties for some time, while mergers of big high-street banks are still blocked. This leaves Lloyds in need of a home for its huge cash flow. In the absence of deals, its decision to rule out a share buy-back seems perverse.

initial offer of around 700p a share still falls short of NAV estimates of about 730p a share. Hence Electra's frantic search for a white knight. Getting an auction going is obviously the best way to push up the price.

difficult to see how this would radically alter investors' views. Meanwhile Electra's share in Electra Fleming, the management company, is worth only around 20p a share. And even that may be fragile if team members defect to other organisations.

Can Lloyds TSB do no wrong? Yesterday's results showed the bank to its best advantage. More than 80 per cent of profits made in the UK, no Russian loans or hedge fund nasties and promises that sky-high equity returns can be maintained despite a slowing domestic economy. Add to that a 29 per cent increase in the dividend – the second successive rise of such magnitude – and it is clear why the shares leapt 8 per cent on the news.

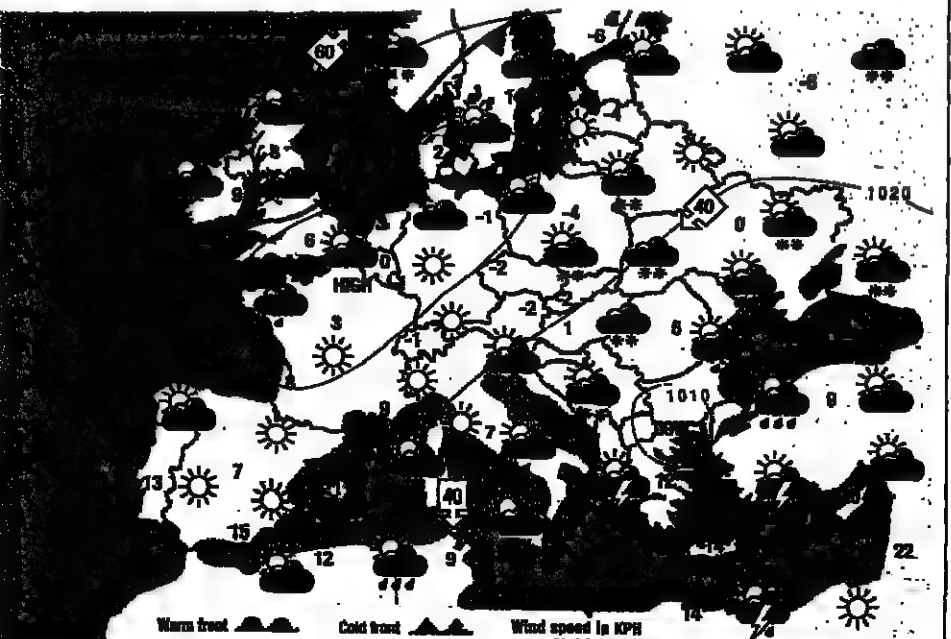
But can this momentum be maintained? Much will depend on whether Lloyds is right to believe

ABB	23	Electra	22	Philips Electronics	23
AGA	22	Flowserve	22	Rheinmetall	22
Alusuisse Lanza	23	ING Baring	23	Roche	23
American Airlines	22	Iberia	22	Rover	23
Audi	23	Lloyds TSB	23	UBS	23
B&B	22	Merck and Spencer	22	UPC	23
BMW	23	Microsoft	23	Viag	23
British Airways	22	Monsanto	5	Visa	23
				Volkswagen	23
				Weir	22

<b>NYSE 100:</b>	6982.7	(+62.8)	<b>US STERLING</b>
<b>Yield</b>	3.71		<b>New York Lendrate:</b>
<b>NYSE Europe 500</b>	1189.80	(+11.73)	<b>1.3015</b>
<b>NYSE A-Shares</b>	2735.41	(+0.94)	<b>Lendrate:</b>
<b>NYSE Europe 100</b>	1497.90	(+21.28)	<b>1.6894 (1.6566)</b>
<b>New York Lendrate</b>			<b>1.4448 (1.4303)</b>
<b>London Jones &amp; Lang</b>	6981.81	(+100.18)	<b>5FR</b>
<b>S &amp; P Composite</b>	1487.77	(-58.10)	<b>Y</b>
			<b>186.240 (185.795)</b>
			<b>Y Lendrate</b>
			<b>100.00 (99.8)</b>
<b>US LONDON MONEY</b>			
<b>3-mo Interbank</b>	8 1/4	(5 1/4)	
<b>3-mo long GR (4 1/2)</b>	117.25	(116.61)	
<b>US LUNDMARK RATES</b>			
<b>Federal Funds:</b>	4.855%		
<b>90-m Treas Bill:</b>	4.56%		
<b>Long Bond</b>	97 1/2		
	5.49%		
<b>US NORTH SEA OIL (Argus)</b>			
<b> Brent Dated</b>	\$10.308	(3.888)	
<b>US GOLD</b>			
<b>New York Contract</b>	\$260.5	(265.6)	
<b>US DOLLAR</b>			
<b>New York Lendrate:</b>	0.0080		
<b>5FR</b>	1.6187		
<b>Y</b>	114.67		
<b>Lendrate:</b>			
<b>1.6887 (1.6623)</b>			
<b>5FR</b>	1.4154	(1.4153)	
<b>Y</b>	114.303	(114.38)	
<b>S Index</b>	105.0	(104.8)	
<b>Tokyo close Y</b>	114.88		

have fog to start with, but should have sunshine later. Scandinavia will be warmer than recently with rain or sleet in the west and sunshine in the south; the north will have heavy snow showers. The Baltic states will be sunny, but eastern Europe will have snow showers. The eastern Mediterranean will have more heavy showers or thunderstorms but the west should be dry, with sunshine across Iberia.

Western Europe will stay fine until Sunday when rain will spread southwards, followed by a cold spell by the middle of next week. Scandinavia and eastern Europe will have snow but snow showers over the Alps will die away, before returning by midweek. The central and eastern Mediterranean will have more thundery showers.



	Maidman	Seaton
Abu Dhabi	Sun 27	Belfast
Accra	Fri 83	Belgrade
Algiers	Fri 12	Berlin
Amsterdam	Sun 3	Bernards
Athens	Thunder 12	Bogota
Atlanta	Sun 5	Bombay
B. Aires	Fri 27	Brussels
Bahran	Cloudy 7	Budapest
Bangkok	Fri 33	Chagen

Sun	10	Carnegie	Fair	28
Sun	6	Canfield	Cloudy	6
Fair	9	Cassablanca	Fair	16
Fair	1	Chicago	Windy	1
Cloudy	1	Cologne	Fair	2
Lower	-1	Dallas	Fair	23
Fair	23	Delhi	Sun	17
Sun	30	Detroit	Windy	27
Sun	30	Dubai	Cloudy	27
Sun	0	Dublin	Fair	9
Cloudy	1	Durango	Sun	6
Windy	2	Edinburgh	Fair	6

London	Fair	1	Malpura	
Geneva	Fair	-1	Malta	St
Strasbourg	Fair	15	Manchester	C
Warsaw	Fair	8	Limassol	
Berlin	Sun	0	Melbourne	
Madrid	Fair	-6	Mexico City	St
Hong Kong	Fair	20	Miami	
Osaka	Fair	25	Milan	
Tokyo	Showers	8	Montreal	
Amman	Cloudy	9	Monrovia	
Paris	Cloudy	9	Munich	
Shanghai	Thunder	27	Nairobi	
Beijing	Sun	28	Naples	
Frankfurt	Fair	28	Nassau	
Ankara	Fair	23	New York	
Sao Paulo	Cloudy	20	Nice	
Yokohama	Cloudy	27	Niamey	
Amsterdam	Sun	13	Oslo	C
Stockholm	Fair	6	Paris	
Hong Kong	Fair	-1	Prague	S
London	Fair	-3	Prague	

Sun		Atlanta	Soft	
Mon	11	Rio	Fair	27
Tue	11	Rome	Fair	7
Wed	7	S. Francisco	Fair	14
Thu	31	Seoul	Fair	3
Fri	28	Singapore	Thunder	20
Sat	28	Stockholm	Fair	1
Sun	21	Strasbourg	Fair	-3
Mon	-2	Sydney	Showers	26
Tue	-6	Tangier	Fair	15
Wed	-1	Tel Aviv	Sun	22
Thu	-5	Tokyo	Fair	7
Fri	6	Toronto	Snow	-4
Sat	25	Vancouver	Rain	8
Sun	5	Venice	Sun	4
Mon	9	Vienna	Snow	-2
Tue	-3	Warsaw	Snow	-4
Wed	3	Washington	Sleet	3
Thu	-4	Wellington	Fair	21
Fri	32	Winnipeg	Fair	-1

ISBN 0 11346 004 0



Chopard is called LUC - short for Louis-Ulysse Chopard - in tribute to the company for setting this fine culture off to its best advantage. The LUC men's watch is produced in a series of 1860 in yellow gold, rose gold, gold and platinum. Model with the "pointe de Gueve" hallmark and a hand-gullock. Ref. 16/1860/2. Available at leading specialists and jewellers worldwide. E illustrated catalogue and list of national concessionaires, please telephone Brimcom Ltd on 0171.446.6353 or 0171.446.6366.

under.  
stage.  
mixed  
white  
you de-  
dial.  
attribution  
r are  
wide  
J.W.  
fax

Very truly yours,



*Chopard*  
**GENÈVE**  
*depuis 1860*

The new movement  
**L.U.C.**  
Heir to a proud watchmaking tradition



97

The automatic movement presented by Chopard is called L.U.C. - short for Louis-Ulysse Chopard! - in tribute to the company founder. Setting this fine calibre off to its best advantage, the L.U.C. men's watch is produced in limited series of 1860 in yellow gold, rose gold, white gold and platinum. Model with the "poisson de Genève" hallmark and a hand-engraved dial, Ref. 16/18602. Available at leading watch-specialists and jewellers worldwide. For an illustrated catalogue and list of nationwide concessionaires, please telephone J.W. Brösam Ltd on 0171-446.6853 or fax 0171-446.6866.  
E-mail: [enquiries@ukbusiness.com](mailto:enquiries@ukbusiness.com)

J.W. Brösam Ltd



# FT

## WEEKEND

FEBRUARY 13/FEBRUARY 14 1999



### Bespoken for

'What should you do if you crave a Saville Row suit but lack the budget - or the gall - to pay the price?'



### New year table

'Certain foods were always served because they symbolised good and noteworthy aspirations'



### Palestinian with authority

'The women of Gaza were not put off by Suha Arafat's blonde hair and western-style clothes'

Page XI

Page XII

Page III



# A place in the country

Moslems in Britain, writes Christian Tyler, want to be regarded not only as Moslem, but British, too

In a few days a proclamation is to be made on behalf of the nearly 2m Moslems who live in Britain. Drawn up by 80 Islamic scholars, clerics, political and social leaders, it seeks to lay to rest what Moslems say is a false stereotype, a persistent caricature of their religion.

Its authors will assert, among other things, that a true interpretation of the Koran and of the *hadith* (the life of the Prophet) gives absolutely no justification for acts of terrorism, kidnapping or violence against civilians.

There is no precedent for such a declaration in Britain. Some may challenge the comparison, but it is as if Catholics under Elizabeth I of England had felt compelled to deny being in league with the King of Spain, or the Jews of Europe their responsibility for the Black Death.

Like those minorities before them, British Moslems feel besieged. Matters have been brought to a head by the trial in Yemen on terrorist charges of five British Moslems, by the warlike rhetoric of demagogues at the wake of the British and US bombing of Iraq, and by the state of nervous alert in western defence ministries.

"This has all come down to the local level," said a young detective constable, himself a Moslem, in Manchester last week. "If there is a high crime rate in some part of the city, people say: 'Is that what Islam teaches you?' And of course it isn't."

At Manchester's central mosque, oldest of 80 in the city, a class of primary school children - brown, white and black - was sitting on the floor of the prayer hall being shown verses of the Koran in Arabic script. The children were on a field trip for the religious studies part of the national curriculum. In the office next door, wearing a grey cap of karakul lamb,

sat Habib ur Rahman, a former state school teacher and first imam of the mosque. "We are British, and proud to be British," he said. "We are also proud to be Moslem. Faith is our identity."

A first-generation immigrant, the imam spoke English fluently. "We have freedom of speech and movement here, freedom of education. At the same time we realise we are right on the bottom step of the ladder."

The imminent joint proclamation is unusual for another reason. Although the mosque - there are about 1,000 in Britain today - is the focus of daily life for Moslems, just as the parish church once was for Christians, there is no high authority - no Pope or Archbishop of Canterbury - to command or speak for them.

The imam is not a priest but a prayer leader. Although some have undergone theological training and can speak English, many have not and cannot. Attempts to create a national body, such as the so-called Moslem Parliament, have collapsed in disarray. Since 1997, the forum with the most national clout is the Moslem Council of Britain.

To make matters more difficult, Moslems are a heterogeneous group. To speak of the Moslem "community" is to give a false sense of its cohesion. Once identified by their place of origin - mainly Pakistan and Bangladesh, but also India, the Middle East, Turkey and parts of Africa - they are now seen, or choose to see themselves, as Moslems. There are rich, educated professionals and businessmen, but many more are poor, ill-educated and unemployed.

It is paradoxical that in a secular society, many of the second generation British-born immigrants should choose to identify themselves by their religion. Ruman Ahmed, a well-educated Bangladeshi working in London, explained that

this was one of the effects of the worldwide controversy over Salman Rushdie's book *The Satanic Verses*. "Hitherto Moslems had, like himself, been moved to identify again with Islam. Thus, while some Moslem women are struggling to assert their independence - from arranged marriages, for example, and the terrible struggles which sometimes ensue - others have taken up the veil, or *hijab*, less as a sign of faith than as an act of cultural defiance in the face of their white neighbours' hostility."

And this is the crux. Moslems want to be British, and Moslem, too.

For all these reasons, they feel vulnerable. If they express solidarity with the *ummah*, their brethren abroad, in Iraq, Libya, Iran, Sudan, Palestine, Kashmir, Bosnia or Kosovo, they are assumed also to share a desire for revenge against their perceived oppressors. If they feel victimised at home - refused jobs or housing - they may fall prey to the rhetoric of militant refugees such as the claw-handed preacher and former Soho bouncer Abu Hamza al-Masri, who appears to think the recent murder of tourists at Luxor was a good idea.

The importation into Europe, to meet a shortage, of foreign imams of dubious provenance was identified as a burning issue at a recent Paris symposium of the cultural body, the Franco-British Council. Although firebrands such as these have little standing in the UK, according to Zaki Badawi, president of the Muslim College in west London, they are a gift to press and broadcasters. They go on television, spit poison and wave their arms about in displays of histrionics which would be funny if they did not so tarnish the reputation of the permanent residents.

A scholar of Al-Azhar University in Cairo, who issued his own counter-fatwa against the late Ayatollah

Khomeini's death sentence on Rushdie, Sheikh Badawi claimed false imams were jumping the immigration queue to get into Britain, where they quickly went to ground. Many of those given priority clearance by the British authorities were semi-literate, he said, with little or no knowledge of Islamic theology and law.

He is concerned, too, about the influence of Saudi Arabia, which not only endows some fine mosques but is equally generous in buying off critics abroad. Missionaries from the Dar al Uloom ("house of guidance") were seeking to impose Saudi observances on British

inside Britain, not only because of the lack of training schools but also because of a reluctance to take on a round-the-clock ministry when there is money to be made and a good life to be had. (Which may be why some imams have taken up job-share.)

Imam Haniff is one of those who received rapid clearance from the British High Commission when he left Botswana 18 months ago to become religious leader of the Masjid-al-Headaya, a mosque converted from red-brick commercial premises, in a poor area of Manchester. A small man, looking much younger than his years, he was chosen by the council which runs the mosque not for zealotry, but for his education, command of English and ability to relate to the young people of the neighbourhood.

This mosque is seen as one of the most progressive in the Old Trafford area - one reason why there is surprisingly little ethnic trouble in the district. Members of the mosque council meet in a red-carpeted upstairs room and recommend how they had been able to help the police and local families by bringing young miscreants back to the values enshrined in their faith.

Detective Constable Umer Khan, disguised by his ethnic dress but not his Lancashire accent, explained the peculiar pressures that young British Moslems are subject to, caught as they are between the strict culture of their parents and the easy-going ways of their peers. When they reject the rules of their home - no alcohol, no sex before marriage - they tend to reject everything. "This kind of person will explode," he said. "Once he is outside his boundary, there is no limit for him. He'll drink and smoke and do drugs. It can be just the same for Hindus and Sikhs."

To say that British Moslems want to live as Britons

**'We have freedom of speech and movement here, but we are on the bottom rung of the ladder'**

Moslems, he said, even to the extent of telling them they had to live apart, forbidding women to seek education, teenagers to play music, and children to play chess and watch television.

In fact, he said, Moslems had no reason to fear that obedience to British law - and many British customs - would make them "bad Moslems". That was clear from a 15th century *fatwa*, guidance given by the mufti of Morocco to those Moslems who stayed in Spain after the Christian army conquered Granada. It stated that they should obey the public laws and keep up their private observances. "What he said then is what I would say now," the sheikh declared.

Other Moslem leaders point to the difficulty of recruiting imams from

## One price for everything you need under the sun.

The best choice of up to eight superb restaurants. The finest accommodation, with a range of suites. All sporting activities from golf to scuba diving (with free tuition), or relax at one of our spas. At Sandals Ultra All-Inclusive resorts for couples only, we provide the very best all included in the price of your holiday. One more reason why we have been voted The World's Best by travel agents worldwide for the past five years.

**Sandals**

For full details contact your travel agent or call

**0800 742 742**

The Caribbean's most exclusive Ultra All-Inclusive resorts for couples only with 10 resorts to choose from in

### Contents and columnists

Arts	VI, VII	Motorway	XVII
Arts Guide	XIX	Outdoors	XVII
Books	IV, V	Perspectives	II, III, VII
Ethics Today	III	Property	Separate section
Fashion	X, XI	Science	II
Food & Drink	XII, XIII	Small Businesses	II
Gardening	XVI	Sport	XVIII
How To Spend It	X, XI	Travel	XIV-XVI
Lunch with the FT	III	Weekend Investor	XX, XXI



**Joe Rogaly**

**Devious diplomacy**

'Governments come and go, but the fundamentals do not change. Arms are sold to make money'

Page III

**NEXT WEEK**

**Round the horn**

'If bullfights remind you of death in the afternoon, think again. They are not all massacres'

Travel Supplement

Chopard

GENEVE





PERSPECTIVES

The Nature of Things

# On the alert for cries of pain

The human immune system may be picking up cellular distress signals, writes Clive Cookson



After the brain, our immune defences are the most complex and least understood system in the body. How do we recognise and repel harmful germs, including ones that no human being has ever encountered before, while tolerating the billions of beneficial bacteria that colonise us? How do we destroy harmful toxins while digesting vital nutrients?

Although immunologists mapped out the system's broad outlines decades ago and molecular biology is now revealing its intricate details, there is renewed debate about how it works at a fundamental level.

In particular, some scientists are moving away from the traditional view - that the immune system's primary function is to distinguish "self" from "non-self" - to a new "danger model". This maintains that the system is looking out above all for signs of distress in the body's cells rather than for foreign bodies. Polly Matzinger, an iconoclastic scientist at the US National Insti-

tutes of Health, is the leading promoter of the danger model.

The debate is intellectually fascinating but has many practical implications too, says Camillo Coleco, an immunologist in Cambridge setting up a biotechnology company to specialise in this field. Cancer treatments, vaccines and organ transplants could all be improved by recognising that our immune response is triggered by danger signals from distressed cells.

Alongside the emergence of the danger model is a renewed emphasis on the "innate" immune system. This provides the body's first line of defence against infection, before "adaptive" immunity kicks in.

The molecular armoury of our innate immunity - determined by the genes we inherit from our parents - remains essentially unaltered from birth to death. It includes various white blood cells and blood proteins whose role is to overwhelm invading germs as quickly as possible. At the least, innate immunity is supposed to hold the invaders

at bay until the second line of defence, adaptive immunity, can come into play. The latter has generally held more interest for scientists. It can produce antibodies and killer T-cells of the right shape to recognise and attack almost any germ or toxin; by rearranging genes, the system can potentially make trillions of different molecules.

But recent research suggests that innate immunity does more than attack invaders with generalised brute force. It seems to have specific ways of alerting the adaptive system to the presence of dangerous invaders.

According to the danger model, "dendritic cells" are a key component in the innate system. They listen out for molecular distress signals, known as shock proteins, that are given off by cells in trouble and immediately activate the acquired system to fight the invaders. Dendritic cells pick up bits of protein from invading germs and present these antigens to the adaptive immune system. It follows, therefore, that if you want to strengthen the immune

response you should increase the activity of dendritic cells. Several laboratories are applying this principle to cancer, by mixing dendritic cells with tumour cells in order to make the immune system recognise and then fight the cancer. They hope to overcome its normal blindness to cancer, which enables tumours to grow with impunity.

Conversely, if you want to weaken the immune response, you should inactivate dendritic cells. The risk of transplants being rejected could be reduced by removing dendritic cells from the donated organ before it is transplanted into the patient.

The danger model remains controversial. But the mysteries of immunity still give much scope for new theories to arise and gain favour. An example is the intimate connection between the brain and the immune system, which explains why your state of mind influences the health of your body. Until recently, scientists had regarded the two as being entirely separate; now they are discovering the molecular

pathways that link them.

Another controversial theory, now beginning to gain supporting evidence, is that exposure to infections in babyhood may prevent allergic or even autoimmune diseases in later life. The idea is that if your immune system does not experience enough germs in its formative period, it will be out of balance for the rest of your life - and make you over-sensitive to allergens such as dust particles. You may also be more susceptible to disorders in which the immune system attacks the body's own cells.

A German study, published last week in *The Lancet*, showed clearly that children who attended pre-school nursery and picked up infections from other children were less prone to suffer allergies such as hay fever than those who stayed at home.

The lesson is that parents who try to protect their offspring from minor childhood diseases are doing them no favours in the long run. Better for baby to suffer a few more coughs and colds than to grow up asthmatic.

Minding Your Own Business

## When waste is not wanting

Edward Clack looked to jails to supply a friend's plastic recycling business. Louise Caruth reports

There had to be a way. Edward Clack, recently made redundant, was being handed a business idea on a plate. But it would only work if he could solve a key problem.

A friend with a recycling business mentioned that he was being offered a type of waste plastic packaging he could not handle. It had to be sorted and have any labels removed before it could be recycled, but the only machines available to do this were unreliable and expensive.

Clack, a former City estate agent, says the answer came to him as he lay awake one night: "To make the recycling cost-effective you needed a workforce on a massive scale which was fundamentally cheap, for want of a nicer word. It struck me that prisons were expanding like fury, with a ready workforce which was underemployed."

The Prison Service proved enthusiastic, so he established ECA Plastics (UK) Ltd. The first hurdle cleared, he set about tackling the second: finding a prison with suitable facilities.

It quickly became evident, however, that many were desperately short of appropriate working accommodation. "Many were just using scout huts," Clack says. After visiting several, however, he finally reached Wayland prison, outside Norwich, "which had excellent facilities, underemployed inmates and an inspired governor. Within two weeks of going to see Wayland in October 1996, we opened our first sorting plant there."

Then came another snag. Clack's bank, Barclays, would not help him with start-up capital, so he dug into his savings for the £25,000 needed to get the

plant ready and into profit - which took about six months. "I ran the plant for the first seven months, commuting from London."

The job involves collecting the plastic waste from retail stores or distribution warehouses in loads of five tonnes or more. The bales are delivered to the prison, broken up and the material piled on to tables. Once sorted and labels removed by the inmates it is baled up again and sold to his friend's recycling plants in Norfolk.

Despite the nature of the workforce, there has been little trouble

folk and Yorkshire, with a guarantee that it will all be of the same quality and colour.

The remaining hurdle is growth. Clack has two plants - at Wayland and High Point prison, near Cambridge. Both are managed by ex-army men, with two other civilian supervisors at Wayland and one more at High Point, which has yet to reach full capacity.

Clack has yet to establish a record of sufficient profitability to borrow from his bank. He can only open new plants, therefore, once sufficient capital has been raised from revenue. "We are hoping that a large manufacturer will sponsor a plant, which will free up funds to open more plants. Otherwise it takes us about 18 months to raise the necessary capital from revenue," he says.

His aim is to have at least six plants at prisons across the UK to minimise transport costs. The High Point plant was opened in February last year. The next one will be at Cardiff prison, possibly followed by Liverpool.

Despite the nature of the workforce, there has been little trouble. But Clack had to hit the panic button once while he was running the Wayland plant.

"One inmate, who showed schizophrenic tendencies, was being picked on by another inmate and we didn't pick up soon enough what was going on. A scrap started and I called in the cavalry." At High Point, his manager Ian Dugan has had to send three inmates to the governor for disciplinary action - one inmate threatened to "suck his throat".

Clack has no control over the choice of inmates and no information about their offence. "If you knew they were an axe murderer, you would flinch every time you walked past them."

He also has to be careful about what he wears. On the first day at Wayland he donned a pair of the green overalls worn by his new inmate workforce - to appear as one of the team. A prison officer put him straight. "Take those off, you idiot," he said. "How would we pick you out if there was trouble?"

Clack is 42 but only employs civilians over 50. "Their age and experience mean they do a better job managing the inmates, who are generally between 25 and 35, than I could."

The venture depends for success on companies separating and storing the plastic waste so Clack can collect it in large quantities. "One company we have collected from since day one is now putting in a system to bring



ECA Plastics' Edward Clack, left, in High Point prison: what was needed was 'a workforce on a massive scale which was fundamentally cheap'

all the plastic waste from its stores back to its central distribution warehouse for us to collect, which is brilliant." But not all companies are so co-operative. Some have been paying contractors to export waste to India and Malaysia.

"Retailers are now coming to us, but it is a slow process. It is damaging the rate at which we can develop because we are not getting enough supplies to run the plants at full capacity."

The British government is pressing businesses to take more responsibility for their plastic waste. However, subsidies for recycling the waste evaporated from February 1, reducing Clack's revenue by 30 per cent. This has prevented him from offering payment to his suppliers.

"We are lobbying everybody from Downing Street down to

appreciate that the plastic waste recycling industry is threatened if the subsidies aren't restored." Clack is investigating new markets for his plants. "We have approached two manufacturers about recycling old consumer goods to meet new European requirements due to come into force later this year."

All his plants are run as joint ventures with the Prison Service. He pays wages and rent, which includes light, heat, power and rates, for the workshops. Running costs are about £1,700 a week at Wayland and £900 at High Point. This means the individual prison is able to recover all its costs in the early days, with the prospect of profit-sharing when supplies of plastic grow and output is higher.

While some inmates murmur about slave labour, Clack main-

tains: "We are not feeding on the plight of the inmates. We pay them on a piecework basis and they can earn between £12 and £20 a week, which is more than double normal prison wages."

The supervisors are paid the full market rate for an eight-hour day, even though the plants only operate for five and a half hours to fit in with the prison schedule. This project could not be done viably outside prison, so we are also not disadvantaging other workers."

Getting the business off the ground has taken a steady nerve. For the first two years it ran at a loss, with additional funding coming in loans from friends. But it is now breaking even. Gross profit from October 1996 to May 1997, the start of the accounting year, was £21,400 against administrative costs of £38,000 - a loss

of £16,600. Gross profit from June 1997 to May 1998 was £75,400, with administrative expenses of £96,000 - a loss of £20,600. So far this year, Clack is just about breaking even, with about £12,000 worth of work a month.

He takes a salary but has to supplement it with management consultancy work, and keeps overheads down by working from home, with his wife Nikki as co-director.

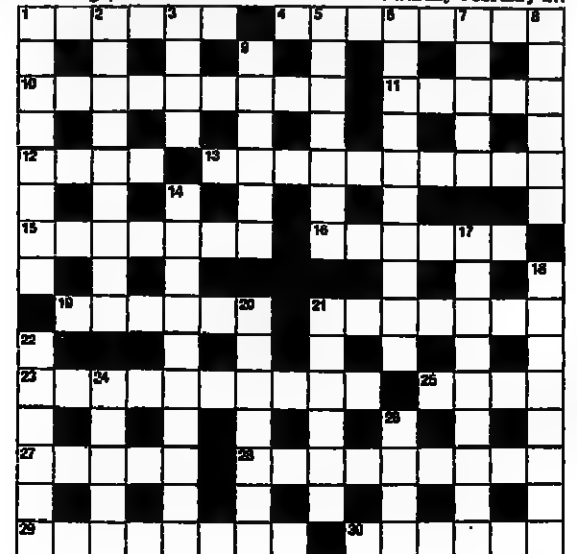
"I am not portraying myself as somehow saintly in setting up this project. I just believe those guys have a better day than they would otherwise. The project is not high-value and we will never make our fortune but it can work to everyone's benefit if we can do it on a large enough scale."

■ ECA Plastics (UK) Ltd, 36 Storrfield Road, London SW12 8HP; tel 0181-767 4518, fax: 0181-767 8618.

## CROSSWORD

No. 9,913 Set by CINEPHILE

The price of a matching set of finely engraved notepaper, envelopes and correspondence cards on Ecu Kid Finish Paper from Crane & Co will be awarded for the first three correct solutions opened. Solution by Wednesday February 24, marked Crossword 9,913 on the envelope. To the Financial Times, Number One Southwark Bridge, London SE1 9HL. Solution on Saturday February 27.



Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Address: \_\_\_\_\_

WINNERS 9,901: Mrs C.M. Drew, Ashford, Kent; E.D. Lucas, Pewsey, Wiltshire; Kella White, Cheltenham, Gloucestershire

Crossword sponsored by:

Abels International Moving Services

Crane's SINCE 1851

## BRIDGE

The most innovative bidding gadget of recent years has been almost universally adopted by the world's expert players. Combining the ace and king-asking attributes of old-fashioned Blackwood with vital checks on trump strength, Roman Key-Card Blackwood is the most powerful slam convention available.

1 Sean confused by the battle (5)  
2 Etiquette requires some protest at backing of lunatic (8)  
3 Defiant journalist on paper with castle in the air (4, 5)  
4 There's little time on vessel to shed tears (5)  
5 Not straight entertainment? (4)  
6 Route during plague gives sign of slowdown (5, 6)  
7 Carson is a puddle (7)  
8 Reactionary fellow led off to the head (6)  
9 Capital H for one's home ground? (6)  
10 Wealthy widow's encouragement to bet? (7)  
11 Ricketty beasts with feather (10)  
12 Brits in France need punishment (4)  
13 Saint of the dance gives us some life (6)  
14 Where to advertise remarkable dog's brain (3)  
15 Naturally propagated individual's individual? (4-4)  
16 Furman, guardian of house when river comes in (5)  
17 For pet son I'm inclined to special treatment (9)  
18 Star that explodes by impregnating the sun with eggs (9)  
19 You or I could be a star (4)  
20 Victory month turns up a little dish (7)  
21 Disparaged and 'united' in built-up area (10)  
22 Caught a breather and held on (6)  
23 Fool in line for mercy (6)  
24 An ecclesiastical source of income is just the opposite (10)  
25 Walker on Holy Island has a line on the Roman soldier (9)  
26 One campaigning for the Salvation Army in less genteel surroundings (8)  
27 Metal cutter's title saying (7)  
28 Sail in river in flood (6)  
29 Wine the churchyard? (6)  
30 Came across a pound mentioned above (5)  
31 Father's title reversible by group (4)

Solution 9,912

DOWN  
1 Sean confused by the battle (5)  
2 Etiquette requires some protest at backing of lunatic (8)  
3 Defiant journalist on paper with castle in the air (4, 5)  
4 There's little time on vessel to shed tears (5)  
5 Not straight entertainment? (4)  
6 Route during plague gives sign of slowdown (5, 6)  
7 Carson is a puddle (7)  
8 Reactionary fellow led off to the head (6)  
9 Capital H for one's home ground? (6)  
10 Wealthy widow's encouragement to bet? (7)  
11 Ricketty beasts with feather (10)  
12 Brits in France need punishment (4)  
13 Saint of the dance gives us some life (6)  
14 Where to advertise remarkable dog's brain (3)  
15 Naturally propagated individual's individual? (4-4)  
16 Furman, guardian of house when river comes in (5)  
17 For pet son I'm inclined to special treatment (9)  
18 Star that explodes by impregnating the sun with eggs (9)  
19 You or I could be a star (4)  
20 Victory month turns up a little dish (7)  
21 Disparaged and 'united' in built-up area (10)  
22 Caught a breather and held on (6)  
23 Fool in line for mercy (6)  
24 An ecclesiastical source of income is just the opposite (10)  
25 Walker on Holy Island has a line on the Roman soldier (9)  
26 One campaigning for the Salvation Army in less genteel surroundings (8)  
27 Metal cutter's title saying (7)  
28 Sail in river in flood (6)  
29 Wine the churchyard? (6)  
30 Came across a pound mentioned above (5)  
31 Father's title reversible by group (4)

Solution 9,901

MONDAY CHANGERS  
P U M U C U E R  
O U Y I N E C H E A T E R  
I O S S S S S S S S S  
L O C O S H O S T I L I T Y  
C S I L N M M M  
E X T R O V E R S E O C R E  
M G A H R  
P L A T R A D I C O R E B Y  
P A A T S S A  
I N S I G N I A T I S T  
C R S S A C I  
E C H I S T M A G I C I T O  
R E I I E S S  
D E N I G A T E S S E N

## CHESS

White's king stays exposed. League chess enables grandmasters to pull rank against lower-graded opponents, who can become bemused by an offbeat opening.

Black operates with too few pieces but the grandmaster's plan only becomes clear at the end when if 15...Qxd5 16 Rd1 Qe6 17 Bd8 mate (A Miles v G Wall).

1 d4 g6 2 e4 e5 3 d4 Nf6 4 Nf3 Nxe4 5 Bb3 Bb4+ 6 B1 d5 7 Qb3 c5 8 cxd5 Nf6 9 dxe5 Nxd5 10 Bg5 Qd7 11 a3 b5 12 Be4 c4 13 Qc2 Bb5 14 Nc3 Bxc3 15 Bxd3 Resigns.

No 1270

Knott, who last autumn won the Hampstead masters' tournament, gave his team the best possible start.

The ancient warning against too many early queen moves is so well known that one assumes that no expert would lose in such a way, but it happens here (C Kennanagh v S Knott).

1 e4 e6 2 Qd2! c5 3 b3 Ne6 4 Bb2 c5 5 f4! Nd4 6 Qd3! d5 7 Nc3 e4 8 bxc4 dxc4 9 Qxc4 Nxc4+ 10 Ke2 Nxa1 and Black won: it's not just the material deficit, but

## CHESS

Barbican, the City team competing in Britain's 4NCL (Four Nations Chess League), are in fourth place behind the leaders Slough at the half-way stage.

But they missed a chance to go second in a competition where two teams qualify for the European Cup.

The London club, whose cosmopolitan squad includes the world under-18 champion Nick Pert and masters from Denmark and Finland as well as fund manager Simon Knott, outgraded North West Eagles, an amateur team from Liverpool and Manchester, on almost every board, but were decisively beaten 2½-5½.

Knott, who last autumn won the Hampstead masters' tournament, gave his team the best possible start.

The ancient warning against too many early queen moves is so well known that one assumes that no expert would lose in such a way, but it happens here (C Kennanagh v S Knott).

1 e4 e6 2 Qd2! c5 3 b3 Ne6 4 Bb2 c5 5 f4! Nd4 6 Qd3! d5 7 Nc3 e4 8 bxc4 dxc4 9 Qxc4 Nxc4+ 10 Ke2 Nxa1 and Black won: it's not just the material deficit, but

## CHESS

White's king stays exposed. League chess enables grandmasters to pull rank against lower-graded opponents, who can become bemused by an offbeat opening.

Black operates with too few pieces but the grandmaster's plan only becomes clear at the end when if 15...Qxd5 16 Rd1 Qe6 17 Bd8 mate (A Miles v G Wall).

1 d4 g6 2 e4 e5 3 d4 Nf6 4 Nf3 Nxe4 5 Bb3 Bb4+ 6 B1 d5 7 Qb3 c5 8 cxd5 Nf6 9 dxe5 Nxd5 10 Bg5 Qd7 11 a3 b5 12 Be4 c4 13 Qc2 Bb5 14 Nc3 Bxc3 15 Bxd3 Resigns.

No 1270

Knott, who last autumn won the Hampstead masters' tournament, gave his team the best possible start.

The ancient warning against too many early queen moves is so well known that one assumes that no expert would lose in such a way, but it happens here (C Kennanagh v S Knott).

1 e4 e6 2 Qd2! c5 3 b3 Ne6 4 Bb2 c5 5 f4! Nd4 6 Qd3! d5 7 Nc3 e4 8 bxc4 dxc4 9 Qxc4 Nxc4+ 10 Ke2 Nxa1 and Black won: it's not just the material deficit, but

First Lac  
rails ag  
corruptio  
confor

...ing P  
...gro  
...are the  
...the  
...early  
...many  
...dren

...ing P  
...gro  
...are the  
...the  
...early  
...many  
...dren

...ing P  
...gro  
...are the  
...the  
...early  
...many  
...dren



## PERSPECTIVES

## Ethics Today

## With the power comes the blame

When the big scandal arrives, the Labour government will regret its accumulation of authority, writes Joe Rogaly

**I**f Tony Blair's administration had any shame you might expect it to blush. Its foreign ministry has been castigated by a select committee of the House of Commons.

Crimes? Not this prime minister. With the nonchalance of a godfather cleaning his nails with a stiletto he informed us that the parliamentary criticisms were "disproportionate and unfair".

The committee investigated the case of Sandline International, a company that had supplied arms to Sierra Leone in spite of a United Nations embargo. The Foreign Office failed to thwart the deal. "A considerable number of serious mistakes were made," we are told.

There is no need to rehearse the details of this little affair. Governments come and go, but

the fundamentals do not change. Arms are sold to make money. Foreign policy is driven by national interest, or a government's perception of public opinion. Diplomacy is inherently devious. Politicians exercise as much power as they can.

I list these basic precepts with a straight face. They might sound cynical, but that is not the intention. Britain is the world's second largest arms exporter, after the US, France, Israel, China and Germany follow.

These six markets of mechanised death account for 92 per cent of global exports.

We might as well admit our dependence on such trade. Mr Blair's government has promised an "ethical" audit of Britain's arms traffic. It is a long time coming. To save trouble we

could ask not to be informed about all the covert deals, backhanders, winks, nods and nudges that lie behind many sales of military hardware.

Ethics has nothing to do with it. Some sales, like those to Nato allies or Taiwan, are supportive of allies. It is not these that most deeply disturb us. Supplies to questionable regimes will always be on the borderline of morality.

If we are fastidious we should switch to the mass manufacture of ploughshares.

Robin Cook has tried to introduce an "ethical dimension" to foreign policy. If the Foreign Secretary has not yet regretted this pretension, he will surely do so before long. When Henry Kissinger was at Harvard he would tell summer school students that national interest determined a

country's behaviour. This was before he became a servant of presidents and learned during the Vietnam war that public opinion is also a factor.

So far we have identified three suspects in the Sandline affair - business, reasons of state, focus group preferences. One of these determined the British Foreign Office's support for the elected government of Sierra Leone. My hunch is that officials naturally favoured an export order for products supplied by a British company. Whatever the true explanation, this was no morality play.

You and I can do little about the fundamentals. We can, however, demand that our representatives in parliament or congress scrutinise the executive, even, on occasion, rein it in. This is

easier to achieve in countries where power is diffused, such as Germany and the US, than in centralised states such as Britain.

Did I say centralised? Mr Blair's ministry faces so few constraints the wonder is it is not more rampantly intoxicated by its own authority. New Labour enjoys a majority in the commons of 178. The Conservative opposition is impotent. The Liberal Democrats are hesitating at the door of the prime minister's big tent. An adverse report by a select committee is easily brushed aside.

Hard though it is to believe, New Labour is still seeking out potential enemies and obliterating them. This week we heard the names of members of the Royal Commission on the future

composition of the House of Lords. Fine public servants though some of them are, none is likely to make any trouble.

The government's wishes are known. They will be obeyed. The new upper chamber will be less able than the present house to delay legislation sent to it by that 178-seat majority in the Commons. Its select committees will be easier to humiliate.

There are still apparent pools of resistance. Most are mirages. Mr Blair is having a little difficulty ensuring that his chosen lieutenants dominate in Wales and Scotland. The Scottish nationalists may prove awkward, but the Treasury retains its control over most government income in the Celtic lands.

None of this matters while New Labour continues to govern

conservatively. Most voters agree with most of what the administration does. Mr Blair's purpose is to retain this support. He knows how to forestall criticism. His first denunciation of this week's select committee report was made on a popular morning radio show.

The danger for the prime minister and his colleagues is that they are human. There are few boundaries to what they can do. One day the whole edifice could be undermined by corruption. We will not be surprised if it is hit by a scandal far greater than the ill supply of arms to a West African government. If - when - that happens, New Labour may regret that it had unblushingly gathered all power, and thus all blame, to itself.

Joe Rogaly@ft.com

## Lunch with the FT

## First Lady who rails against corruption and conformity

Fighting cynicism among Palestinians, Suha Arafat will not stay in the background, says Judy Dempsey

**T**he women of Gaza had been waiting all morning for her. Then suddenly, one Palestinian woman shouted: "There she is." Dressed in traditional long dark dress, the woman rushed forward and, the security guards, undeterred, Suha Arafat, perched her new BMW and walked over to the women to hear their grievances.

They were not put off by her blonde hair and western-style clothes. They believed that the wife of Yasser Arafat and First Lady of Palestine could improve their lives.

"What can I do?" said Suha Arafat, who turns 36 this summer. "Every day they come here asking me to help them. It's not my job. They - the Palestinian Authority - should visit them and see their living conditions."

The women had gathered outside Palestine Avenue, a medical centre Suha Arafat set up five years ago to treat children with cerebral palsy. The clinic provides physiotherapy, treatment and education for more than 80 children. Another 600 are treated in their homes.

Nearly every day, Mrs Arafat, shunning chauffeur and police escort, drives to the clinic. And nearly every day, like a scene out of 19th century Russia, the women present their petitions to the president.

"I give the petitions to the president," said Mrs Arafat, who a decade ago, in her mid-30s, married Yasser, then in his late 50s.

She explained how Arafat signs petitions for people who need treatment for heart problems, money problems, housing problems. "Sometimes it amounts to \$100,000 a day," she paused. "It's better that the money

goes to all these people... than them... "Them" refers to the officials in the Palestinian Authority, the executive body that runs Palestinian-controlled areas. Mrs Arafat makes no effort to conceal her loathing for them.

She suspects the feeling is mutual, since she is unusual for someone in such a position - and as a woman - for speaking out against corruption in the authority. "If I want to criticise the officials, I will do it face to face with the person. They get upset because I tell them they are

**'We have to educate the people about not marrying too early or having too many children'**

corrupt. They go to my husband, screaming and asking why I am doing that?"

But rather than talk only about the corrupt counselors surrounding her husband, Suha Arafat took me through rooms where children were playing or learning. They immediately smiled when they saw their benefactor.

Unabashed, Mrs Arafat picked up some of the small children, or chatted informally with her young staff. But as she was not content to return to the confines of her office in the clinic, we crossed to an annex to meet more staff. Again, the women were waiting outside. Again, Mrs Arafat paused to accept the petitions. "All I want to do at

the moment is focus on the children. The next generation is our only hope."

With startling frankness, Mrs Arafat said families were too large. Inter-marriage too common. "We have to educate the people, especially the young, about not marrying too early or having too many children. The resources are too limited, the risks of congenital diseases too high in Gaza."

Then, in a spontaneous gesture, she said: "It's time for lunch. Let's go home." Outside, the women were still waiting.

It was a short distance from the clinic to the heavily guarded Arafat household, tucked away in a small compound-type neighbourhood not far from the Mediterranean. I had heard that the Arafats lived simply, in contrast to some leading Palestinian Authority officials. Nevertheless, I was still surprised when I saw Mrs Arafat's apartment and private office.

We climbed two flights of stairs. The modest apartment opened out on to a spacious but far from grandiose living room which spilled into a small dining area. A portrait of Arafat dominated one of the walls. Photographs showing one or other of the Arafats posing with dignitaries and celebrities were dotted around the rooms.

Without warning, Zahwa rushed towards her mother. Mrs Arafat picked up her three-year-old daughter, switching back and forth from Arabic to French as the Senegalese nanny looked on. "ZuZu. Please. You join us for lunch?" We dined on a table - lentil soup - fresh fish, roast lamb and an assortment of salads. All the time, Mrs Arafat managed to talk to Zahwa, entertain her guests, relished her meal



Suha Arafat: "It is morally important we declare a state. It will give us a kind of hope in ourselves"

and dwell a little on her life with Yasser Arafat.

She admitted it was not easy being the First Lady in a society where women were encouraged to stay in the background. But then, her background did not encourage conformity.

Born in Jerusalem in 1963 into a bourgeois Christian Palestinian family, Suha

Arafat inherited her energy and outspokenness from her mother, Raymonda Tawil, a journalist and writer who now divides her time between Paris and Gaza.

Her practical, down-to-earth views may have been inherited from her father, Daoud, a banker who opened branches of Grindley's bank in Jordan and the

Palestinian city of Nablus. Such traits, however, initially jarred with her new environment when, in 1994, the Arafats returned from exile in Tunis to Gaza.

Many Palestinians, especially those close to Arafat, did not accept her. She was a Christian, her husband a Muslim. She converted and remained for a while on the

sidelines, unsure how to adapt to the intense personal rivalries among Palestinian families and uncertain how to establish her own identity.

Some Palestinians, said Mrs Arafat, were cynical about her activities, believing, for instance, she was running the medical centre for cheap publicity. It hurt

her at first. But over the years, she explained, she had become resistant to gossip and backstabbing.

"For how long can you make propaganda? I work here almost every day. The price you pay is jealousy, conspiracies. And you pay youth and beauty. Every day you pay a price."

Yet what keeps Mrs Arafat going, at least for the moment, are the women she helps. "There are strong women in Palestine. When I get depressed, I say, 'My God, look at these women. They survived the Israeli occupation. They survived the Intifada (the uprising against Israel) and fought it with stones. You think liberated women have problems? You should see these women in the refugee camps with all their miseries, illnesses and diseases.'"

Even if more money was poured into the camps or - and it is implausible - if refugees were offered new

**'You should see these women in the refugee camps with all their miseries and diseases'**

housing, they would never leave, she said. "It would be an admission of defeat on their part if they left."

Throughout our four hours together, there were times when Mrs Arafat admitted she was frustrated with all the propaganda and the limelight thrust upon the Palestinians - and her husband. "We are fed up with being in the limelight. Too much limelight burns..."

Yet it has been her husband's dogged revolutionary fervour that catapulted his people into that limelight, to the stage that Palestinians are on the verge of declaring an independent state. It is a prospect that thrills, but also depresses Mrs Arafat. "It is morally important we declare a state," she said. "It will give us a kind of hope in ourselves." But she was tired of all the pressure over whether her husband should declare a state in May, and thought the whole issue had been exaggerated. "Tell me, is the world afraid of the word 'state'? We have been made stateless by the Israelis."

"You know, if you don't recognise yourself, nobody else will recognise you" - something she herself has learned since living in Gaza.

## Counterblast

## Rumbles as Bill bumbles

Michael Carlson and friends form a small island of resistance to the Bryson charm

**A** large group of Americans, each with more than a decade's residence in Britain, is gathered to watch the Super Bowl semi-finals. While they channel surf, as Americans feel compelled to do at the slightest pause in coverage, the screen fills with the bearded chipmunk face of Bill Bryson.

A painful groan arises unbidden, a disbelieving protest directed at a cruel divinity which has just tossed the unbearable in one's face. The host jumps up to protect the TV screen from flying debris. Whether male and female, inebriated already or only part way there, hailing from New England or Chicago, Buffalo or Florida, all voices unite in one rant: Not Bill Bryson!

In Britain, Bryson is Father Christmas's favourite elf. Four of his books dominated last year's best-seller lists. The BBC eases Christmas withdrawal pains by feeding its audiences Bryson like methadone, as he excuses-me his way around this tale, reminding us just how accepted it is. But to

expatriate Americans in Britain, Bryson is like a prisoner who's been made a trusty because he sucks up to the guards.

"He's terminally cute, and he does the bumbling thing well, but you just can't read a whole book of that," says lawyer Scott James, 30 years in the UK.

The "bumbling thing" is that inverse snobbery which affects not to be able to cope with the pressures of everyday life. The challenges of travel can be a great equaliser, but the subtext is that certain people, through their natural, well, Britishness, will always be able to endure and rise above life's little indignities.

"He appeals to some English genetic coding that isn't in my body," says Allen Haight, a ven-

ture capital specialist. "Maybe you get new DNA at Hestonrow if you agree to pander to your hosts."

Pandering seems the right term for someone who can use phrases such as "a capital idea" or "rather cold out, what?" with a straight face. Here's Bryson on Stonehenge: "Whoever was the person behind Stonehenge, he was one Dickens of a motivator. I'll tell you that." Dickens of a motivator? Gadszooks! Reading Bryson being British is like reading the Sherlock Holmes stories without Sherlock Holmes.

Michael Goldfarb, a frequent contributor to BBC Radio in his 13 years in London, says: "He panders to the English sense of what Americans should be like,

without any of the insight which you'd expect a native American to provide. Like his constant harping about lack of irony."

In his position as an analyst of language, Bryson insists Americans are so irony-free they have no phrase for "taking the mick". As if Puff the other one, Bill. Get on with it!

"Bryson's popularity reveals much more about who the English think they are, than anything about America," says Goldfarb. "In fact, for years, he couldn't sell a book in the US."

That situation changed last year when *A Walk in the Woods*, Bryson's account of walking the Appalachian Trail, hit the best-seller lists in America.

"It was his breakthrough, and has stayed there for half a year," says Dick Donahue of Publisher's Weekly. "But I wouldn't be able to say why."

Donna Friedman, buyer at Words Worth, Harvard Square's leading bookstore, says personal selling by independent bookstores made Bryson's book successful. "It was word of mouth," she explains. "The sales reps liked it. His earlier books did tell Americans much about their own country, and they couldn't relate to his take on England, but the Appalachian Trail was just romantic enough to make a pseudo-foreign view popular."

In the wake of that success, Bryson returned to the US, judging by his columns in the British press you would think Hanover, New Hampshire, where he now lives, was a pine-tree jungle of barbaric backwoodsmen living in log cabins. In fact, the seat of Ivy League Dartmouth College is the Volvo capital of upper New England, where the residents dress from preppy catalogues and listen to National Public Radio.

"Bryson's like a straight version of Garrison Keillor," says Friedman, "but he does the English shtick better than the Midwesterner."

The limitations of this approach become most apparent when Bryson moves beyond the welcoming bosom of his adopted homeland to take on Europe.

True to its title, *Neither Here Nor There* shows him bounding schizophrenically between ugly American and bumbling Brit. The childish naïveté which the British expect from Yanks abroad is at war with the exaggerated politeness they see in themselves. Bill piles on both, which is like making your martini with both gin and vodka. You still get drunk, but it's less fun getting there.

Bryson once described his reluctance to be the first of his tour party to leave Stonehenge. His feelings were a frothy mix of feeling impolite, being embarrassed not to be as enthralled as his fellow tourists, and having a keen desire to get the full value from his £2.80 admission. How much more British can you get?

Some travel writing aims at letting the exotic seduce you. Bryson's takes the opposite course, persuading you that, in the end, there is no place like home. Unlike Dorothy, however, he wants to stay in Oz. But to other Kansans at home in the Emerald City, the cult of Bill sounds more like the Munchkins giving us their impressions of Topeka.



BOOKS

# Where the bland man is king

Patti Waldmeir on how to be black and how to be white in modern America

In end-of-century America, the territory where race and language converge has never been more dangerous. There are livelihoods to be lost there: ask David Howard, the white ombudsman of the District of Columbia, who resigned last month after using the word "niggardly" on the job. He was lamenting the paucity of his departmental budget, but a linguistically-challenged aide took offence at what he misheard.

In the end, Howard was rehired (in a different job); but most city blacks and many whites still insist he made a grievous error of

uses of the "n" word (popular in African-American slang either as a taunt, or a term of self-deprecating affection). His advice: blacks may use it about other blacks, and whites may do so too, but only if they are liberal enough.

The book includes a silly debate over whether or not to capitalise the word "black" ("African American" is preferred) and on whether whites should call themselves "European Americans". But on the whole it offers sane and practical advice on how to avoid giving racial offence - and more unusually, from a black writer like Jacobs, on how to avoid taking it.

It is a heartfelt book, born of the author's frustration at everyday racial slights: the way that, on a crowded bus, white passengers take every seat except the one next to him; the way white women clutch their handbags when he steps into an elevator; the hostility of black women toward his white dates.

Jacobs pleads with whites to stop seeing race as a danger sign: to look beyond colour to judge the demeanour and behaviour of the individual. As a middle-class black professional who dresses the part, Jacobs understandably hates being taken for a mugger. But this is a risky argument which boils down to: look at my class not my race. Jacobs should not suggest that prejudice against ghetto blacks is any more justifiable than any other kind of racism.

Lawrence Mungin, the subject of Paul M. Barrett's book *The Good Black: A True Story of Race in America* (Dutton \$23.95, 296pp), also counted on class to trump race. The author, a former college roommate, recounts the tragedy of Mungin's efforts to prove he was "like white people". Bused from a poor black area of New York to a white school, he grew up as "a poster child for integration". He attended Harvard for college and law school, scoring the "Harvard-Harvard double" which white employers find irresistible.

Mungin believed that if he played by white rules, the white system would welcome him; that was, after all, the implicit promise of the civil rights revolution. Blacks were told "get educated; your time will come". So he begged his Harvard-Harvard double and



A successful black woman from another age: 1920s star Josephine Baker. 'America never liked [her]', said Dorothy Dandridge. 'Above all, they resented that she'd left America. What she was supposed to stay here and become a maid?' From *Life Legends: The Century's Most Unforgettable Faces* (Little, Brown £18.95, 176pp), which targets the great personalities of our era through startling photography.

got a job at a Washington law firm - where he ended up suing his employers for racial discrimination.

*The Good Black* dramatizes the problems of America's large new black middle-class, which has made it into affluent society but still feels thwarted and uncomfortable. Openly racist behaviour is uncommon, but many blacks perceive lingering discrimination. Mungin's claim of racism - which triumphed in a lower court but was reversed on appeal - is a difficult one. He can point to no overtly racist comments or actions, and though he was obviously treated badly by his firm, so were many of his white colleagues. The firm may have been a place of, in Barrett's words, "equal opportunity unhappiness" -

it expected young lawyers to work insanely long hours: Mungin was unwilling to do so and his career suffered irreparable damage.

Lawrence Mungin may have been the victim of callous, but colour-blind, mismanagement; or he may have been discriminated against because of his skin. Either way, he was a pioneer of integration, and his failure to reach that goal is both moving and worrisome.

Where *The Good Black* details a test case in integration, Tamara Jacoby's book, *Someone Else's House: America's Unfinished Struggle for Integration* (Fries Press \$30, 514pp), paints the big picture. "Whatever happened to integration?" she asks. What happened to Martin Luther King's dream?

From New York to Detroit to Atlanta, she pursues her tale of how the colour-blind ideal faltered. Her deep resentment against black-on-white racism gives the book a tone of unattractive bitterness. But her insights into the failure of the King dream are compelling.

Harriette Cole's *How To Be: Contemporary Etiquette for African Americans* (Simon & Schuster \$25, 524pp) and Lawrence Oles' *Our Kind of People Inside America's Black Upper Class* (HarperCollins \$25, 418pp) are two altogether more lightweight books. The former seems curiously similar to white etiquette books of the 1950s, with a dose of nostalgia for African traditions thrown in (when planning a black wedding, the author

counsels, "consider divination to discern the opinions of the ancestors"). *Our Kind of People* is more interesting: it reveals the existence of a separate, upper-class black culture, complete with debutante balls, all-black boarding schools, social clubs, and fraternities. But membership is open only to those with the lightest of brown skins and straightest of hair. The brown paper bag and ruler test (skin no darker than the bag, that is, and hair as straight as the ruler) still operates after all these years; what a sad thought.

To order any of these books, and for quotes of UK prices (UK p&p is free) call the FT Bookshop on +44 (0)181 324 5511.

physical force operated in both celestial and terrestrial realms.

Much later, and even more radically from a theologian's point of view, Hubble got out his telescope and realised that space had a history. "From stasis to story", the Big Bang destroyed the notion of an eternal, celestial realm, and Wertheim's conclusion, years down the line, is that once the physical world is perceived as infinite, there is literally no space for the spirit.

Which brings her back to Dante, and *The Divine Comedy* as a prototype MUD (Multi-User Domain). MUDs are computer-generated spaces, or virtual combat zones, in which subscribers assume alternative identities. Just as Dante must journey through circles and spheres of spiritual progression, the disembodied player must advance through varying levels of expertise. Her equation of the "wizard" who creates the MUD with "Dante's heavenly elect" is dubious - after all, Dante's is a moral journey that ends with perfection.

Luckily, though, Wertheim is not simple-minded enough to pursue the analogy. She recognises that when we download our minds on to our PCs, we may be entering a realm in which "souls" are freed from "the bloody mess of organic matter", but there is no underlying moral code or sense of communal responsibility. We have re-created a space for out-of-body experiences, and the possibility therein of an eternal resting-place for our cybersouls. But she leaves the question - is this space heaven or hell? - to future cyberhistorians.

# Monica and Margaret: unlikely icons

"Feminism encourages women to leave their husbands, kill their children, practise witchcraft, destroy capitalism and become lesbians".

Question: In what year did a US politician make this statement in public? Answer: (a) 1882 (b) 1993.

Almost unbelievably, the latter is the correct answer. Yet by 1992, feminists seemed to have forgotten, or perhaps did not realise, that such attitudes were not only lurking under the surface, but still on the surface itself, proud and unabashed. In a time when all forms of prejudice are supposed to be unacceptable, it is still apparently quite all right to equate feminists with everything from misanthropy to facial hair (although the actual destruction of capitalism, *pace* the congressman quoted above, was a new one to me).

"Feminism" remains a problematic term, one that has never achieved a neutral, simply descriptive sta-

- appearing in overtly sexual poses in such magazines as *Esquire* and *Loaded*, as if achievement in any arena other than the sexual is not complete without that. And a climate of political correctness that has doubled back on itself: "if we say we find something offensive, say we don't like Ulrika in shackles, then we don't understand the spirit of the times; we don't get the joke." A joke, presumably, for girls who just want to be one of the boys.

**ON THE MOVE**  
Feminism for a New Generation  
edited by  
Natasha Walter  
Virago £9.99, 186 pages



Bold voices: Helen Wilkinson (top) and Katherine Viner

tus - like democracy, for instance, or mountaineering. Feminists became somehow embarrassed by the word, and some even took to using the meaningless epithet "post-feminism", as if it were all over, a nasty little episode that had to be endured but could be forgotten about now.

One of the strengths of the book Natasha Walter has put together is that it does not question the term, and stoutly reasserts the need for the thing itself. Does it still matter? Is the basic question, and the answer, from 14 young (including some very young) women, is a resounding yes.

Two of the contributors are in the form of interviews from *Children's Express*, a charity that operates as a news agency; one interviewer is just 13. These teenagers are admirably clear on the issues, and well-versed in the right words and wily tactics. If their comments come over as a little stiff, a little goody-goody, that is at least to err on the right side.

Another piece, by journalist Katherine Viner, takes up the example of Monica Lewinsky - who was perhaps an unlikely feminist icon, but who has undoubtedly become one simply because of the ease with which she could be denigrated even by the liberal press. "She was labelled a 'sexual initiator' as if the phrase were a slur," Viner notes, and goes on to discuss the extraordinary set of contradictions which now surround us. Highly successful young women - she mentions television presenters Zoe Ball and Ulrika Jonsson

Helen Wilkinson examines the impact of Margaret Thatcher as a role model for young women, and in particular for herself, 14 when Thatcher came to power and the daughter of a chemist at Shotton steelworks facing redundancy. Another curious contradiction - that one of the most successful self-made women should have been so hard to embrace as a "sister". But Wilkinson does not take the easy route, and proclaim, as some women did, that Thatcher was actually anti-feminist. On the contrary, Wilkinson, says: the trends and statistics of the Thatcher years tell an optimistic story for women generally, with women entering higher education, the professions and the work-force in unprecedented numbers.

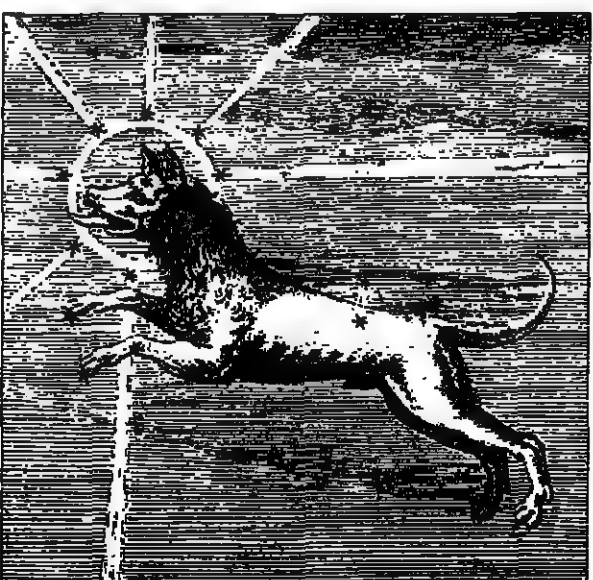
Wilkinson's, like Viner's, is one of the more complex and interesting of the essays here. Feminism, like any idea, has its own version of doctrinal correctness, and feminists can wear blinkers as well as anyone else: a few of the pieces here do stray towards the worthy but dull. These two writers, however, have the courage to think creatively and sometimes to state an unpalatable truth, and hence unusual distinction to this thought-provoking collection.

Catherine Sharp

According to Margaret Wertheim, "the Heavenly City of New Jerusalem" was the great promise of early Christianity: that set it apart from other obscure religious sects of the time. Wertheim, an Australian science journalist, states that Christianity's initial appeal must be set in the context of the disintegration of Imperial Rome. The offer of "an eternal haven of radiance

# Absolute heaven

Lilian Pizzichini finds transcendence via bits and bytes



Before we lost sight of the heavens above, and Einstein superseded Dante: starry figures from the Poeticon Astronomicum, 1681

such, cyberspace offers a genuine if immaterial world in which people are invited to commune in a non-bodily fashion, just as medieval Christians rose up to "the heavens" after life on earth.

Essentially, Wertheim treats the Net as though it were a liberating force that has broken free from the iron rule of physics. What is most interesting about her thesis is that through her reading of literary and philosophical texts, cyberspace can be seen as the latest expression of the human desire for a spiritual life that takes place within a codified site.

It is no coincidence that cyberspace has attracted a host of new religious sects, and she firmly puts them in their place. But first she has to explain how we lost sight of the heavens above, and how Dante, the "supreme cartographer of Christian soul-space", was superseded by Einstein.

For the purpose of her book, *The Divine Comedy* must be seen as a "journey out of Hell and up the stairway of purgation to Heaven". What interests her most is the spatial arrangement of the ascent. Dante's "soul-space" is organised into hierarchies, with sin acting as the gravitational

force that pulls the soul down towards Hell. As the "virtual Dante" travels through Purgatory, sin is lifted from him until he is light enough to reach Heaven's pearly gates. As Wertheim triumphantly concludes, "The very structure of the space encodes the spiritual transformation being enacted."

It was perspective as employed by Giotto that changed the shape of that space. As a pioneer in the "technology of visual representation" his geometric figuring created the illusion of three-dimensional reality. In his work, St Francis is shown moving through

"real" space and is drawn on the same scale as a beggar. To make the illusion more real, Giotto painted shadows into his frescoes that seem to be cast by the actual windows on a church's walls. This interplay of architecture and art and the astonishing realism of his images diffused the boundaries between celestial and terrestrial spaces.

Next in Wertheim's packed account is Galileo with his telescope locating a sun-centred cosmos with no physical boundaries. This is the age, as Henri Lefevre said, when mathematicians appropriated space. Newton's law of gravity asserted that a single

**THE PEARLY GATES OF CYBERSPACE:**  
A History of Space from Dante to the Internet  
by Margaret Wertheim

Virago £14.99, 320 pages

and light" achievable by disciples of the new religion was all the more attractive given the disharmony and chaos reigning on earth.

By the Middle Ages, a dualistic cosmology in which the physical world was enclosed by a spiritual, immaterial space was firmly established. And it was only in this latter space that the soul could operate.

Then comes Wertheim's neat segue to our own era - that of Pax Americana and the end of empires - in which, instead of Jesus's final, democratic resting place of bliss, we have the internet. For dedicated Net heads living in an age devoid of spiritual space, "today's cybertheologians" offer a virtual transcendence via bits and bytes that are electronically configured in a non-physical space. As

## Save time and money.

To order any book in the FT call the FT Bookshop now  
**0181 324 5511**

Call us today; we are open 7 days a week  
10am to 5pm weekdays : 8am to 7pm weekends  
automated ordering at all other times.

**Global service - order and send books anywhere in the world**  
Personalised gift service. P&P UK: 99p total per order  
Airmail: Europe, 20% of order value; RoW, 30%.

Information request line: **0181 324 5597**  
Call for the latest list of FT Bookshop bestsellers.

**FT Bookshop**  
250 Western Avenue, London, W3 6EE  
Call **0181 324 5511** now  
Fax +44 181 324 5678 FTbookshop@btvod.prestel.co.uk

**FINANCIAL TIMES**  
No FT, no comment.



## BOOKS

**D**oes anyone write with joy about, or from, Russia now? What has become of the burst of freedom which was permitted by, then engulfed, the last Soviet regime of Mikhail Gorbachev? The courage and commitment to liberty of the leadership of Boris Yeltsin?

All illusion, it now seems. Change happens – as the religious philosopher Berdyaev noted of the 1917 revolution – not according to its proclaimed purpose, but behind the mask of that purpose. The reality is power re-assembling and where possible strengthening itself. Liberation has nothing to do with it. The fundamental things always apply.

The military has for centuries been one of the fundamental things in Russia, proclaimed as its pride and saviour but usually its curse. The communists injected into it an ideology even stronger than the earlier blend of orthodoxy and Tsar-worship; in the furnace of Sta-

### THE COLLAPSE OF THE SOVIET MILITARY

by William Odom

Yale University Press £25, 480 pages

#### RUSSIA: THE WILD EAST

Granta £7.99, 236 pages

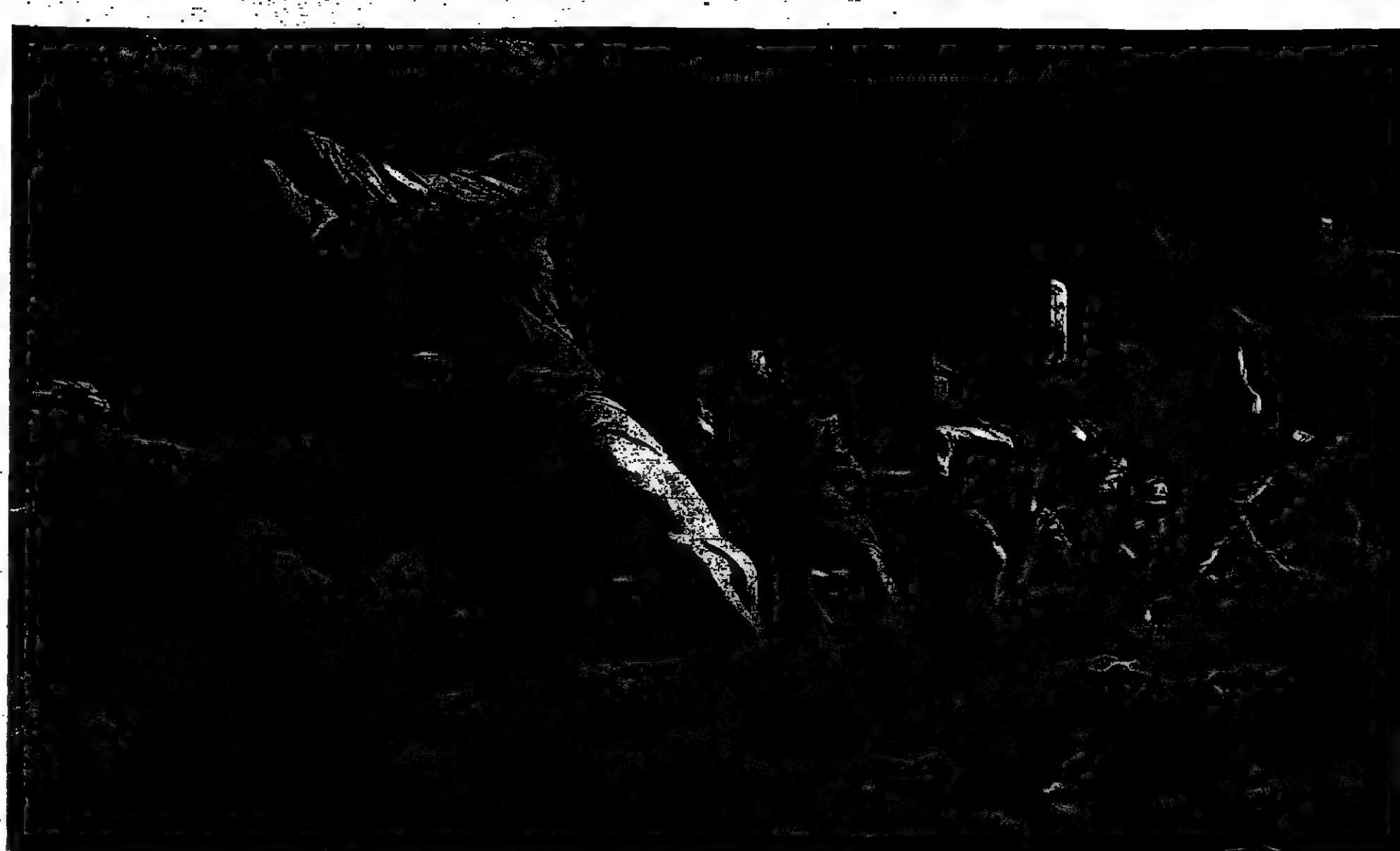
linism and of the "Great Patriotic War", as the second world war was called, Fatherland, Party and Military fused into a whole.

General William Odom has long been one of the US's foremost experts on the Soviet military. He developed the view – a minority one – that the military was the armed wing of the Communist Party, whose leaders shared and deepened the belief that capitalism and imperialism could and should be overthrown. This included the use of nuclear weapons. Former Soviet officers told Odom in interviews conducted after the Soviet collapse that nuclear weapons were thought to be able to "achieve any political or military objective, even the most extreme ones – typically, all calculations were based on the assumption that nuclear weapons would be used".

The Soviet Army, carefully cultivating both the facts and the myths of total victory in the Great Patriotic War, employed the useful dogma of the defeat of imperialism and the useful paroxysm about encirclement by imperialism to build up a force which could challenge the NATO alliance. It was served by a military-industrial complex that pre-empted 30 per cent of national resources and had first call on the best technology and scientists.

Gorbachev wrecked all this. As he came to understand the ruined state of the Soviet economy, he became convinced of the need to cut back on the military (he inherited forces of over 5m) and on the dominance of the military-industrial complex. His opening to the west was, initially at least, in order to relieve pressure on an arms race he could only lose. He succeeded, but at the cost of destroying both the military and the Soviet Union.

Odom's book – scholarly, opinion-



'The Defence of Sevastopol', 1942, by Aleksandr Deineka: the military, proclaimed as Russia's pride and saviour, has usually been its curse

The Bridgman Art Library

## A nation puts itself to the sword

Where is the spirit of freedom in Russia? John Lloyd describes a country still bleeding after the collapse of communism

ated and at times exciting – sees the dissolution of the Union as intimately linked to military collapse. The democratic forces released by Gorbachev proved to be a much more effective enforcer of the military than Nato. Scholars, journalists, soldiers, mothers, and even officers accused the military leadership of huge waste, total secrecy before Gorbachev, no one but the General Secretary knew the military budget, and even he incompletely, and allowing a barracks life in which hundreds of soldiers were murdered, tortured and raped by their comrades. The response was many defensiveness; slow, unwilling reform; self-enrichment on the part of many senior officers; and finally, revolt of a section of the military leadership in August 1991.

In that failed push – which Odom describes with skill and knowledge – the military imploded. The defence

minister, Marshall Dmitri Yazov, was one of the plotters, though early disillusioned, he went down with them, as did Gorbachev's former military adviser Marshal Sergei Akhromeyev, who committed suicide. Air Marshal Yevgeny Shapovalov, who was to become the last leader of the Soviet forces, did oppose the coup from within: others – including generals Pavel Grachev (the first Russian defence minister) and Alexander Lebed (a presidential candidate, now governor of Krasnoyarsk) – backed this way and that and finally came out against it.

From these ruins, the Russian military was "reconstructed". In fact – this goes beyond the scope of Odom's analysis – it continued its decline. The book clarifies something that was a mystery to those of us working in Moscow at the time – the rout of the rabble which was the Russian army in Chechnya in

1996-6 at the hands of guerrilla forces many times inferior in size and weaponry. The army had been destroyed over the previous decade – starved of funds, drained of able officers, trained conscripts and of any vestige of purpose by the criminalisation of the generals and the connivance of the politicians. Above all, it had lost the Party – a loss which destroyed the Soviet Union and from which Russia has not yet recovered.

**T**he collection of essays and fiction in Granta's issue on Russia deepens our understanding of that loss. It reprints a wonderful story by Victor Pelevin: the best of the post-Soviet writers, his novel, *Omon Ra*, should be read as a fictional counterpoint to Odom's documentary. The despairing hero of the Granta story,

Serdyuk, is induced to commit *hara kiri* by a Japanese businessman because he sees nothing to live for in his own society, and the *sawarat* code provides at least some kind of moral yardstick. The last straw in hearing some girls giggle over the latest appearance of the Russian president on TV – "Pleased again!" Serdyuk thought for a few more seconds. 'Ah to hell with the lot of it,' he said decisively. 'Give me the sword!'

In an essay on the burial of the Romanovs remains last year, Orlando Figes, one of the most original of western historians on Russia, notes the proliferating nightmare predictions for the collapse of Russia and concludes that "without some truer version of their past... the Russians will never arrive at the destination of a liberal and tolerant democracy". Measha Gessen, a Russian journalist, writes with delicacy of

her grandmother, who worked for the KGB as a censor; she poses "the obvious question – where do crimes begin and end and who, decades later, can be held responsible?"

She gives no answer. There is none concretely available in Russia now. We are left with an image conjured up in a little memoir of great power by Charlotte Hobson: a student named Petya Pravda ("Peter Truth"), whom Hobson met while herself a student, drank and drugged himself to death. He lived only for his thoughts, and for talk; he saw that "freedom lies in the spirit, not in the body".

He died young, of course, and was buried with an excuse for a religious service. In Russia, still, to live outside the society is the only place where you can be honest, but in doing so you condemn yourself to a metaphorical, or to a real, death. "Give me the sword!"

## Love bites

The Australians are famous for straight-talking, and one Valentine's Day offering from Sydney makes a virtue of telling it like it is – beginning with the heart on the cover, which is a sailor's tattoo, and the blunt title. *Screwed: Stories about Love and Sex* (Allen & Unwin £7.99, 214pp) is a collection of 26 stories which read more like front-line dispatches from the gender wars than a timely tribute to the spirit of romance. Sydney's particular barbed wire stretch across varied territory, too: the editors – Ruth Beesey and Samantha Trenchworth – invited contributions from filmmakers, songwriters, journalists, actors and artists to put together a series of fictions that celebrate sexual experience of every complexion and complexity.

Some qualify as horror stories. Bronwen Phillips's "Hen's Night", a vivid description of Girls Behaving Badly filtered through the weary perceptions of the waiter and waitress, who know what they are in for before the cocktails. Long before the male stripper turns up, "the hens settled themselves at their table, chirping and clucking their talon-like nails, some set with false jewels, clawing open cigarette packets and fingering lipstick smudges". As the one married "hen" twiddles her diamond rings triumphantly, crowing at the obscenely shaped cake she has ordered for her friend, the waitress thinks of her own brief and brutal marriage, and the two children it left her with.

There is tenderness in this collection, however, and even a glimpse of the spiritual. In the excellent "The Songs of Leonard Cohen", a young girl learns a few of life's lessons through a gradual realisation about the nature of her parents' relationship; "Brother Ryan's Heavenly Gate" paints with a light touch the shrivelled inner life of an orphan boy who took refuge in the church. The language gets coarser in stories like "When Lachlan Strang Finally Saw Halley's Comet", which shows the sexual and emotional insecurity behind the foul-talking, mono-adjectival Australian male – a revelation that is hardly a surprise, but done deftly enough to tease out our sympathy. This uneven but on the whole enjoyable volume ends with a chunk of "Bridget Jones's Diary" – which seems an unmistakable way of saying that enough is enough.

**P**am Houston obviously likes to be thought of as a tough woman, in close touch with the Great Outdoors. Apart from *Cowboys Are My Weakness*, her first volume of stories, she has edited an anthology called *Women on Hunting*, works as a river and hunting

guide and lives high up in the mountains of Colorado. It should come as no surprise, then, to find that her heroines are the kind invariably described as "feisty" – and in *Waiting for the Cat* (Virago £9.99, 288pp) Lucy O'Rourke, photographer and runaway spirit, is made in the same mould.

She is adventurous in a way that makes you feel rather tired just to think of it, and samples the exotic of the natural world in a way that would do credit to an Attenborough programme: "Renato said he would take me to the north coast to see the remains of the ancient culture of Agua Blanca, to the Isla de la Plata to see the blue-footed boobies, to the cloud forests near Mindo to see the anteaters by the hundreds of thousands, each one carrying a piece of leaf over its head like a parasol." Despite all this burgeoning nature, however, Lucy declares: "I'll admit I picked *Squidward* for its symbolic possibilities."

Love, though, presents more difficulties than "watching the

biggest spider I'd ever seen in my life systematically devour giant mosquitoes by candlelight". "I always pick the wrong man," Lucy says of herself – "My friend Henry says I can turn anybody into the wrong man." In this, Lucy is all too easy to fathom, and the bungled relationship with mad Eric the inventor, with Carter who was "way too pretty" and with Marcus who was way too perfect, are sometimes a jarringly predictable note in a character who is otherwise endearing.

But in this wandering existence it is the land and not a person which holds out the lure of stability, and on the Rio Grande ranch she inherits from an equally formidable grandmother Lucy can start to lick her emotional wounds. Despite its tough-talking this is a modern American fable, with all the comforting sentimentality of the genre, and all the contingent pleasures.

Julia Sutherland



Catherine Sharp

## The Reich approach

**T**hird Reich and Holocaust studies are a growth industry. As historian Ian Kershaw recently reflected, there are now over 120,000 works on Hitler alone, with the numbers on a steady increase. But it is not really surprising: the fascination with the Reich is the fascination with evil, but to an extent beyond comprehension. At the one end is a nation with a glorious cultural past, apparently like others in Europe; and at the other is a mountain of ashes, the remains of millions who were murdered by the state created for and by this nation. Yet the line connecting the two seems forever unclear, and what does become clear is totally unacceptable.

Accepting that some knowledge is unacceptable is a significant strength of *Official Secrets: What the Nazis Planned, What the British and Americans knew* by Richard Breitman. Allen Lane £20, 325 pages

### OFFICIAL SECRETS: What the Nazis Planned, What the British and Americans knew

by Richard Breitman

Allen Lane £20, 325 pages

"Intentionalist" and "functionalist". The former referred to a pyramid state headed by Hitler as an absolute dictator, in which orders went clearly down a chain of command. The second theory suggested the Reich was in fact a loose cohort of power bases, with Hitler as a weak dictator navigating among them, and events occurring as a function of these subjects has been researched and analysed extensively; and as with the Führer, much still remains unclear.

But it is the fertility of cross-referencing which makes this book particularly appealing.

Richard Breitman has effectively taken up the major historical controversies concerning the Reich that have emerged in the last two decades, and forged them into a coherent whole.

In the early 1980s, historians were much engaged with the issue of plans for the Final Solution – split between those who viewed the Nazi structure as was an ideological goal, planned and systematically pursued. It was not a haphazard or sudden response to the developments of war.

Similarly, the book is well balanced in its depiction of the German population and its active participation in the Holocaust. Since many documents reflect that ordinary Germans did take part in acts of genocide, the issue is one of interpretation, rather than revelation. This has become the fashionable historical debate, with one camp claiming that public participation can be explained largely through peer pressure, without any ideology, while the other insists the collusion was an expression of pervasive nationwide anti-Semitism.

Breitman reflects both opinions, and the original documents, very carefully – leaving opinion to the reader. However, by presenting the Nazi state as ideology-driven, he makes it difficult to accept that a populace could be completely lacking in thought or intent, especially when

decoded German reports from the late 1930s onwards, held by the British and the US, suggest otherwise.

But then, it has only lately become clear that these two former Allies held substantive numbers of such documents. And whichever way one reads them, these reports not only reflect upon events in Germany – but also upon the fact that both Britain and the US knew of them.

In other words, the governments knew of the Holocaust, as it unfolded. Yet apparently neither did anything about it, though official statements acknowledging the killings were made as early as 1942.

Those who defend the governments' stance, and subsequent secrecy, insist it emerged from expediency: the issue was winning the war, not pursuing justice. Those attacking it invoke all moral reasoning, condemning the inaction as acceptance of genocide.

This third historical debate, which emerged in the mid '90s, is possibly best addressed in this book – not least in an excellent epilogue, which is a personal essay on discovering the sources. Or rather, uncovering them, since the authorities of the respective countries have chosen either not to acknowledge their existence, or to barricade the way of those who sought them. But Breitman broke through to produce this fine, comprehensive and often painful book. Curiously, by placing himself within it, he offers the reader an easier avenue of approach to the unacceptable world of the Reich.

Hana Bet-El

## Enigma variations

kind that allowed the almost miraculous preservation of Bletchley's secret source of information throughout the war – and well into the cold war, too, when the cryptanalytical techniques developed there were directed towards a new enemy, Soviet communism.

### STATION X: The Codebreakers of Bletchley Park

by Michael Smith

Channel 4 Books £14.99, 184 pages

They were helped by the unshakable German conviction that the Enigma codes – several variants were used by each of the three armed services – were impossible to break.

Ultra's contribution did not begin until the spring of 1941, as the Enigma cipher was progressively decoded. The effect was powerful, if not always decisive, in the fluctuating north African campaign.

By the time of the battle of Alamain, Ultra's influence was less powerful than the decisive superiority – 5 to 1 – in tanks and airpower enjoyed by the

Allies. The disappointment felt at Bletchley was that, given the constant stream of intelligence being supplied to Montgomery at the time, he was not able to cut off Rommel's retreat before he reached Tunisia.

Its influence in the war against the U-boats – where the naval Enigma was broken from the second half of 1941 – helped provide the information about U-boat locations to re-route convoys to safety. It has been calculated that about 1.5m tons of shipping were saved and valuable time was bought to build new ships and develop more effective anti-submarine defences.

Michael Smith's book accompanies a four-part Channel 4 series on the wartime codebreaking centre, and it has some of the faults that inevitably beset the "book of the film" genre. Its anecdotal and generalist style will suit those coming to the subject for the first time. But quotations on a printed page from the codebreakers cannot rival the pathos and potency of seeing spy Bletchley Park veterans, speaking to camera, reliving the exhilaration of breaking Enigma. Nonetheless, if *Station X* can point a new generation in the direction of the Bletchley Park literature, it will have served a useful purpose.

John Münch

Save time and money.

Order any book in the FT Bookshop now

0181 324 5511

or by fax 0181 324 5511

or by email ftbookshop@ft.com

or by post to FT Bookshop, 100 Brook Street, London W1A 2JA

or by telephone 0181 324 5511

or by fax 0181 324 5511

or by email ftbookshop@ft.com

or by post to FT Bookshop, 100 Brook Street, London W1A 2JA

or by telephone 0181 324 5511

or by fax 0181 324 5511

or by email ftbookshop@ft.com

or by post to FT Bookshop, 100 Brook Street, London W1A 2JA

or by telephone 0181 324 5511

or by fax 0181 324 5511

or by email ftbookshop@ft.com

or by post to FT Bookshop, 100 Brook Street, London W1A 2JA

or by telephone 0181 324 5511

or by fax 0181 324 5511

or by email ftbookshop@ft.com



# Fem



## ARTS

## Familiar by name but not by nature

El Greco stands curiously alone at one of the crucial moments in the history of western art, writes William Packer

Of all the great masters of the 16th century, Domenikos Theotokopoulos, commonly called El Greco, the Greek, is at once as familiar as any great painter, and as obscure and problematical. The idiosyncrasy of his mature style, with its mannered elongation of the figures, its dominant greens and crimsons and the peculiarly animated nature of its composition, has always marked him out, whether in making difficulties with would-be patrons in his lifetime, or affecting his popular reputation after his critical rehabilitation in the later 19th century.

Loved or hated, his work is recognised immediately by those who have never known his proper name. Scholars agonise over his putative assignation and a tantalisingly inadequate biography. Artists revere him for the true and great painter he unquestionably was in an age of the truest and greatest painting. Between Titian, among whose later pupils he may have been, and Velázquez, between the late Renaissance and the Baroque, El Greco stands curiously alone at one of the crucial moments in the history of western art.

He was born in Candia, in Crete, in 1541. He served an apprenticeship there, but with whom is not known. How long he remained there, too, is uncertain — but he was certainly in Venice by 1567, moving on to Rome in 1570. By 1577 he had moved on again and settled at Toledo, the religious centre and, until only 16 years before, the Imperial capital of Spain.

There he was to remain until his death in 1614, working principally on commissions for the church, and painting portraits.

Two of his very greatest paintings remain in Toledo to this day, in situ — "The Burial of Count Orgaz" (1586) in the little church of S. Tome, with SS Stephen and Augustine miraculously in person lowering the saintly soldier to his grave beneath the gaze of the company of heaven above, while the little boy, almost certainly a portrait of El Greco's son, turns to face us to include us in the reverent crowd; and the desperately poignant "Disrobing of Christ" (c.1579) in the Cathedral Sacristy, with Christ beset by the crowd, while Mary and the Magdalen turn fearfully to watch the carpenter prepare the cross.

His life-long journey, from Crete to Spain by way of Venice and Rome, at once physical, personal and stylistic, is what the exhibition now at the Museo Thyssen-Bornemisza in Madrid seeks to trace. It amounts nominally to 100 works, the largest El Greco show in nearly 20 years if not the largest ever, but at around 70 at each of its three stops it is by no means over-large. It begins with some important works, unfamiliar except to the specialist, by certain 16th century painters of the Cretan School, Elontzas, Damaskinos and Lombardos, to set the immediate post-Byzantine context in which El Greco himself grew up. This emphasises the importance to him, throughout his life, of the Byzantine pictorial tradition, both formal and imaginative — the hieratic central presence of the figure; the disrupted space and abrupt shifts of scale; the constant counterpoint between the spiritual and the profane, heaven and earth.

But the Renaissance influences had reached Crete by then, not just to affect the native school,



One of the great masters of the 16th century: 'The expulsion of the moneychangers from the Temple' c. 1567-70, by El Greco

but to lure the ambitious young artist away. It was El Greco's experience of Italy, and of Venice especially, that was to form the mature artist. If we see him ultimately as Spanish in his career and established reputation, our response to him is always qualified by the sense of a softer, more indulgent sensibility, not just in the humanity of his imagery, but in the paint. To look at El Greco is to remember Titian, Bassano, Tintoretto. The case is put, almost incidentally, by one of the portraits in the show, the lovely half-length "Lady with an Ermine Skirt" of about 1578. The figure, hand and stole are painted with an entirely characteristic, mastery delicacy, but the paint-

ing is still questioned by some for the unexpected sharpness in the definition of the face. But then who would not suppose, within a year of his arrival in a foreign land, that an artist of El Greco's skill and curiosity might not attempt the harder manner that he found there, marked at once by Spanish temperament and Netherlandish influences.

In repeatedly setting together works on a common theme that span the three phases of his career, Cretan, Italian, Spanish, of the Penitent Magdalen, St Francis, St Peter and St Lawrence, the exhibition effectively demonstrates both the natural circumstantial differences within the work, and its essential conti-

nunity. And so, beyond questions of "identity" of the show's subtitle, it turns us always to those of the painter's "Transformation", his development. Constant comparison is made, early with late, between images of the boy with his guttering candle, of the Adoration of the Shepherds, of SS Peter, Paul, Jerome, of Christ and Mary, his Mother. One St Paul indeed confronts us in the natural pose of the conventional self-portrait: St Paul was the patron saint of Candia; and in this St Paul do we find El Greco?

Who knows? In the end, indeed, beyond all manner of scholarly enquiry, we come to the painter himself, as painter. Three small studies of

ideal heads but clearly worked intimately from life, bring us up short. A room full of portraits, mostly male, takes the breath away by the immediacy of their humanity, foreshadowing by 200 years the psychological intensity of Goya. And alone on one far wall hangs, for me, the greatest painting in the show, the full-scale but half-length version of that "Disrobing of Christ" at Toledo. In it, at the mid and turning-point of his career, newly-arrived in Spain, we have everything of the true El Greco — the Venetian colour, the active handling, the Christ figure in almost an ecstasy of resignation, the encircling mob and, to one side, the dispassionate soldier in

his armour who, in half-presenting his victim to us, half-invites our complicity. It is he, in the quizzical humanity of his presence, who speaks to us directly across the centuries, who brings us down to earth.

El Greco: Identity and Transformation — Crete, Italy, Spain 1560-1600: Museo Thyssen-Bornemisza, Paseo del Prado 8, Madrid, until May 18, then on to Rome and Athens. Sponsored by Barclays Bank; visit courtesy of Klerk Holidays, with additional sponsorship from Iberia Airlines; The Palace Hotel, Madrid; the Spanish National Tourist Office; and the Patronato Municipal de Turismo de Madrid.

## Radio/Martin Hoyle

## Femmes fatales with musical connections

Call it the Zeitgeist, call it synchronicity, but just as television is obsessed with sex in both fact and fiction, radio rears its head on radio. Here the women make most of the running. Radio 3's *Sound Stories* devoted itself this week to femmes fatales with musical connections. Radio 4's new series, *My Mistress Music*, deals with femmes fatales with musical connections. Munday's afternoon play, *The True Memoirs of Harriet Wilson*, evoked the founding mother of kiss and tell memoirs who prompted the Duke of Wellington's famous exhortation of "Publish and be damned!", a femme fatale with — well, she went to the opera where the repertoire appeared to consist solely of the overture to *The Barber of Seville*. Wednesday afternoon saw the dramatist (but not very) correspondence between those pre-eminent victims of amour fou, Abelard and Heloise. It's love that makes

the schedules go round. Alas, I missed Radio 3's *Brief History*, Honor Blackman presenting the story of knickers through the ages.

Abelard and Heloise disappointed, despite clear and resonant translation by Ranjit Bolt: a simple reading of letters between the scholar and the pupil who became his mistress. The first long mislaid letter in the story's essentials, ending with Abelard's castration by Heloise's vengeful uncle and their subsequent seclusion in houses of religion. Heloise's letters were still passionate, still reaching out for a human relationship, very much about Abelard. Abelard's letters were also about Abelard, now occupied with sin and

repentance; though when he recalled his handsomeness and scholarly brilliance only to deplore their results, you felt he was having the cake of vanity while eating the humble pie of penitence. Very disingenuous.

*Sound Stories* was a peg for innocuous snippets of music sometimes tenuously linked to each subject, like Satie's *Parade* which, we were solemnly informed, Mata Hari might have heard from her prison window had she been able to stick her head out far enough — and presumably listen hard enough (there is no evidence that she did; or that if she did she remarked on the fact). The most interesting, musically, was the piece on Josephine Baker (Poulenc's

*Rapsodie Nigra*, Offenbach's *Le Créole*).

Best of this wave of polyphonic promiscuity was *My Mistress Music*. Lucie Skeaping makes a jolly presenter, backed up by unpretentious but informed experts, balancing historical narrative with comment and musical excerpts. Tuesday's look at Madame de Pompadour reminded us (if in fact we knew) that Louis XV's most famous mistress exemplified a riches to riches story since her husband father was "the Bill Gates of 18th-century France".

Overcoming the discouraging surname of Fish, the young Jeanne Poisson first met the king when he was dressed as a clipped yew tree. This was in no *maison de rendezvous*,

I hasten to add, specialising in exotic fantasy, but at a court ball. Pompadour was a good singer who even built opera houses (though one seated only 14 people), sang trouser roles (doubtless with the time-honoured purpose of showing her calves), and last performed in public in music by the philosopher Rousseau. Her physical relations with Louis occupied a short period in their durable relationship: she disliked sex, but the usually voracious king valued her vivacity and sense more than transient gratification — priorities that BBC executives would do well to note.

"The Germans are getting a bit too big for their jackboots," I caught *Any Questions* at Saturday's repeat just in time for the

above observation. Note the nice stereotyping use of "jackboot". This was Dennis Skinner MP, resorting to the traditional insularity, ignorance and xenophobia of the British working class that he champions so loyally. The remark triggered a knee-jerk burst of applause from the West Midlands audience. Of course, the context was

purely economic, the unemployment threatened by German bosses closing down Midlands-sited factories. But any racist can cite economics as justification.

The previous evening a local London television programme had broadcast the secretly filmed conversations of notorious racists, including those

acquitted of Stephen Lawrence's murder. The jeering truculence, the rancorous tribalism, the resentfulness of outsiders, then, enjoying what is denied us: the tone, if not the language, was chillingly familiar. This year Germans, next year who will it be politically okay to bash? Yanks are always good for a sneer. And if we get away with Jackboot caricatures, what about garlic-eating frogs and curry-popping Pakis? I have rarely felt so angered and ashamed by one of our elected representatives.

## Television/Christopher Dunkley

## Racial affairs



Stephen Lawrence: why has his murder had such a high profile?

ing in London, anyway. The trouble is that where any normal television investigation of cultural development would feature argument and dissent to test the claims that are being made, this programme lacks even the most gently probing questions. Assertions are made — India is finally cool, young Asians are really shaping club culture, and so on — and allowed to pass without query, so that we have no way of knowing whether they are really true or merely the sort of hopeful bragging that any self-promoting group might produce.

Does it seem likely that young Asian women are wearing union flag dresses and Doctor Marten's boots, or is that just the fond fantasising of an ambitious young Asian fashion photographer? If anything in music which can truly be described as "Asian" is really crossing cultural boundaries, why is it that the example we are offered from *Top Of The Pops*, performed by a group called Cernershop, sounds just like everything else? True, there is one moment of dissent when an Asian playwright, Parv Bhanji, suggests that the very idea of

"Asian cool" is damaging because anything which comes into fashion will inevitably go out of fashion. But his contribution lasts less than 15 seconds.

For the rest of the half hour, the programme walks tiptoe around the subject as though walking on eggshells. Why? Do they assume that Asians are so much more sensitive than other people that they will be offended if their claims are questioned? In what way does such a racial generalisation differ from "They have such a wonderful sense of rhythm"? And why, anyway,

is this programme so obviously aimed at Asians? If, as participants in the programme keep on claiming, they are such classic examples of multiculturalism, why is the programme itself a glaring example of monoculturalism? Why are we not hearing about Asian influences from West Indians or Greek Cypriots or even from white Anglo Saxons?

We are back with that old Channel 4 difficulty: a hatred of white racism and a determination to promote every other sort. It seems horrifyingly obvious that such divisive attitudes — the labelling of some people as "Asian" and different, rather than merely brown skinned Britons — must be a part of the problem and not of the answer. BBC2 carries an excellent programme this evening, *Why Stephen?*, which tries to establish why the murder of Stephen Lawrence, and the failure of the police and the legal system to bring the culprits to justice, has achieved such a high profile.

It is a remarkable programme which not only provides much the clearest chronological account of the whole affair yet offered by television — there have been

several others recently — but a fascinating analysis of the social factors which have kept this murder on the front pages when others, very similar, have been ignored and forgotten. Towards the end of the programme that admirable reporter Charles Wheeler (the BBC should insist he abandon retirement and front his own regular series) says:

"What is surely indisputable is that during the first crucial fortnight after the murder, the police did not try hard to catch the killers. Stephen was young and he was black and, among enough police officers to matter, that was sufficient to trigger a set of assumptions, a prejudice, in which the victim became a suspect in his own death. That was what bedevilled the inquiry from the start."

What is not addressed in *Why Stephen?* is why anybody should have wanted, in the first place, to kill someone solely because his skin was a different colour. However, it is hard to avoid the feeling that one of the factors behind the animosity could be the belief that different skin colour means different culture, different attitudes, a separatist mentality. And what precisely is it that Channel 4's race programmes set out to emphasise?

THE PALACE  
THIS WINTER,  
WITHOUT  
THE ROYAL  
ROOM RATE.

With our Palace Club Package, you only need to pay with \$165 to enjoy the amenities and services of the Palace, including private check-in and business centre, complimentary airport pressing, breakfast, tea and afternoon coffee. For more about this and our other No-Frills Rates, contact The Palace Hotel Beijing or The Peninsula Group Reservations Centre.

王府飯店  
THE PALACE HOTEL  
Beijing

Managed by THE PENINSULA GROUP

8 Goldfish Lane, Wangfujing, Beijing 100006, P.R.C. Tel: (86-10) 6512 8809 Fax: (86-10) 6512 9050  
E-mail: pph@peninsula.com Website: www.peninsula.com

Peninsula

one of The Leading Hotels of the World

U.T.S.I.



## OFF-CENTRE

# Tigers chasing the dragons of success

The Asian miracle is having damaging side-effects, writes Victor Mallet

At this talk of "Asian miracles" and "Asian values" at the start of the decade did not just hide the economic weaknesses that were brutally exposed in the financial meltdown of 1997.

The boasts of Asian leaders have also glossed over a social revolution - involving drug abuse and crime, consumerism and one-parent families - that is sweeping through every country in south-east Asia.

The drug problem in Malaysia epitomises the dark side of the region's modernisation. Malaysia's drug addicts are the losers in the country's high-speed industrial revolution, rarely noticed by those who admire its modern shopping malls and electronic factories.

And there are plenty of addicts: officially 180,000 at the last count, with some estimates more than double that figure - alarming in a country with a population of 21m, especially when many of the addicts are so young.

Take Abdul-Aziz Nordin. His mother died when he was nine years old. His father was a local official in the southern Malaysian state of Johor. He was an ordinary teenager who didn't like his stepmother. By the age of 14 he was smoking marijuana. Two years later, when no one could find any marijuana for a few days, he tried heroin.

That first experience, he says, was "very wonderful". But life went downhill from then on. He moved from Johor at the age of

19 to stay with his elder brother, who was working at a bank in Kuala Lumpur. The heroin addiction got worse, in spite of a two-month pause after his father took him to a *bonoh*, a spirit medium.

Within a few years, he had started to break into houses, to finance his drug habit; he committed more crimes and was in and out of jail; eventually his father rejected him. "My life after that was a living hell," he says. "I suffered a lot. I used to pick out food from the garbage. People

**Politicians are involved in the very activity they are supposed to suppress**

used to hit me and spit in my face."

From 1990 he spent two years in a government rehabilitation centre, but he was soon back on the streets. "This time it was really rock bottom, and in early 1993 I was in a coma, and hallucinating for 14 days. They sent me to a general hospital in KL. My lip was swollen, my arm was paralysed."

"I spoke to the doctor. I cried and asked him if I could stay. But no. I went back to the street and I bought two tubes of heroin. I wanted to commit suicide, but I didn't feel anything. That's when

I realised I had to do something about my life."

Nordin was one of the lucky ones. He went to a half-way house funded by Australians and Malaysians and weaned himself off heroin. He worked for an American consultancy firm studying AIDS and HIV, the virus that causes it - HIV is common among drug users who share needles - and these days is helping drug users at the Ikhlis drop-in centre. Now 40, he looks well and was relieved to find he did not have HIV. He has been off drugs for more than four years.

Ikhlis, however, is not short of customers from each of Malaysia's main ethnic groups: Malays, Chinese and Indians. The drop-in centre in the Kuala Lumpur district of Chow Kit - a warren of busy streets and lanes lined with concrete shophouses and frequented by gangsters, drug addicts and prostitutes - was set up by a gay charity called Pink Triangle, whose workers used to find homeless addicts living on the streets with maggots crawling out of abscesses on their bodies.

The centre has a simple clinic, showers, a kitchen and dining area and a sleeping room. Upstairs is a similar refuge for prostitutes and transsexuals. It provides the services that the Malaysian government - which frowns on homosexuality and confines drug abusers in its 28 drug rehabilitation centres around the country - does not. Addicts sprawl on mattresses on the floor in the middle of the day.

"Many of them have been away from their homes for 10, 15 or 20 years," says Palaniappan Narayanan, the Ikhlis project manager. "We don't want them to die like dogs on the street - which has happened quite a few times."

Addicts come from all levels of Malaysian society. The bored rich can get their kicks from easily obtainable ecstasy, heroin and now cocaine, while the poor more often than not turn to drugs out of despair after migrating from small country farms or agricultural estates to make their fortunes in the capital.

"Our youngsters have no-one to turn to," says Haji Mohammed Yunus, a former addict who heads the independent Pengasih half-way house, where addicts are treated in a group of buildings next to a motorway in Kuala Lumpur. "Urban values are very materialistic. People go for prestige. Drugs are available."

Neither political nor Islamic leaders are much help. "The youth leaders fail because they are not youths, they are old," says Yunus. "The *ulamas* are failing to attract the young. They are always explaining the rigidity of religion. You cannot be rigid. Malays are confused."

Statistics are alarming. A survey of young people between the ages of 13 and 21 by the Youth and Sports Ministry showed that 14 per cent took hard drugs. In 1997, the head of the Thai general education department recommended all schools should conduct regular urine tests on students because of the abuse of



taking in Asia is not confined to a few hill-tribesmen peacefully smoking opium pipes for the benefit of tourists.

In Thailand, the health department estimates vaguely that there are 100,000-600,000 heroin and opium addicts in the country. But it is sure of three facts: heroin is widely available and widely used; the average age of drug-abusers has been falling; and heroin is by no means the only dangerous drug on offer.

In 1997, the head of the Thai general education department recommended all schools should conduct regular urine tests on students because of the abuse of

drugs including amphetamines and solvents. Amphetamines are particularly widespread in Thailand, where truck drivers use them to stay awake - a practice which helps to explain the country's exceptionally grim record of road accidents.

According to the United Nations International Drug Control Programme, more than half of Thai truck-drivers take drugs. Thailand is estimated to have 260,000 amphetamine abusers, and had a total drug addict population of 1.27m in 1993.

South-east Asia has the misfortune to be the source of most of the world's opium, the substance

from which heroin is synthesised. "Along trafficking routes there's always some leakage because syndicates pay their couriers in kind," says Vincent McClean, director of the UNICP's regional centre in Bangkok.

"Traffickers are businessmen and if they can develop a local market as well as an international market, they will." Vietnam's heroin problem is worsening partly because the country has recently become a favoured export route for drug smugglers.

Asian governments are beginning to realise that drug abuse is as much of a threat to their achievements of the past three decades as the much-publicised financial crisis. "Whereas some years ago governments in east Asia regarded drug abuse as a problem affecting western societies," says McClean, "they now perceive it as a threat to the economy and social fabric in their own countries."

South-east Asia's attempts to curb drug use, including the death penalty for trafficking in several countries, are nevertheless undermined by the involvement of corrupt politicians and policemen in the very activity they are supposed to be suppressing. This is a particular weakness in Burma, Thailand, Cambodia, Vietnam and Indonesia.

In one Bangkok school, a policeman's son was said to be re-selling to his fellow pupils drugs that had previously been seized by his father's colleagues.

Vietnam has similar difficulties. "The pushers are in the schools," says one opponent of the Vietnamese government in Hanoi. "It's getting much worse. The ideal for everyone is to become rich, and it doesn't matter how. It's even the police - even the anti-drug police - who sell drugs because they have the power to do so."

*This is an edited extract from The Trouble with Tigers: The Rise and Fall of South-East Asia, published on Monday by HarperCollins, £19.99.*

## Fences torn down in a fight for existence

Michael Peel finds conservationists are moving away from nature reserves and towards community action

On Great Bird Island, a Caribbean idyll about the same size as London's Millennium Dome, lives a troubling symbol of an era of aggressive economic expansion.

The island is home to the last colony of the Antiguan Racer, a peculiarly powerless serpent that lacks venom and moves at walking pace. About 80 survive from a population destroyed over the years by western imports such as rats, mongooses and, in recent times, tourists seeking tropical seclusion.

The racer's perilous existence was highlighted this week after a project to save it was named as one of the winning entries in the Whitley Award Scheme for conservation. The Great Bird Island programme, run by British biologist Jenny Daltry, was one of a shortlist of nine ventures competing for a total prize fund of more than £100,000.

The awards, administered by the Royal Geographical Society, did more than bring into focus the plight of some of the world's rarest flora and fauna. The projects, and the people behind them, raised important questions about western approaches to endangered species and the people who live alongside them.

The candidates certainly demonstrated a cultural awareness that reflected the range of nationalities they represented. As they gathered on Monday night in the unexciting surroundings of a Kensington pub, one could have met an Indian expert on medicinal plants, a Brazilian specialist in lion tamarin monkeys and an Italian studying komodo dragons.

Their approach to conservation was well expressed by Lindy Rodwell of South Africa, the winner of the main award, who said her attempts to sustain dwindling crane populations depended on rejecting old notions that species should be protected by creating

sanctuaries. "We are moving away from nature reserve conservation and towards community-based conservation," she said. "Ninety per cent of land is privately owned and all the problems are coming out of the agricultural sector - poisoning, egg collection, hunting and habitat destruction. Putting a fence around 600 hectares is not going to save anything."

She emphasised the need to convince land-owners, the traditional enemies of conservationists, to assist programmes in their localities. That, along with economic incentives for agricultural workers, was essential if endangered species in Africa

**'We want to be seen as community workers, not instruments of the west'**

were to be saved. Her remarks reflected a general desire among the candidates to be seen as community workers rather than instruments of western patronage.

Nothing aroused greater scorn, said Shaikat Hussain of Project Snow Leopard in Pakistan, than a perception that a scheme was run by and for "animal lovers sitting in New York and Washington".

Hussain aims to set up locally administered insurance collectives to compensate animal owners in the event of a leopard killing their livestock. Without his programme, he said, there would be "rich" going on to help save the world's estimated 3,000 leopards from falling victim to poaching and a shortage of prey.

If Hussain's project could be

described as classical, in the sense that its subject readily arouses public sympathy, there were plenty of less glamorous schemes on offer. The shortlist was notable for featuring two projects based on plants, traditionally the Cinderellas of the world of conservation.

The work of Hugh Synge, a Briton who is trying to link the world's tiny band of dedicated florists, exemplifies the increasingly wide scope of conservation work. The philosophy seems to be shifting away from single-animal campaigns and focusing instead on groups of species or entire habitats.

One of the broadest-based projects on the shortlist was run by Harry Andrews, who is trying to rescue vast numbers of endangered species on the Andaman and Nicobar Islands south of Burma.

He is working for greater sustainability by encouraging more discriminate killing of creatures such as sharks, which have been slaughtered in great numbers to satisfy export demand for their fins. "No one in the Andamans really benefited," he said. "It was all middle men from Hong Kong and Thailand."

Andrews's words might have been all but drowned out by the background music, but his sentiment echoed around the room.

If long-term conservation solutions remain elusive, the schemes showcased this week at least indicate how the inevitable might be delayed. The racer, which numbered only 50 four years ago, might have been extinct by now if Daltry had not intervened.

Ultimately, the only hope for the racer, and other rare species like it, might be to adapt to the cynical age that has consumed them. "They are lovely animals to work with because they are not afraid of people," says Daltry. "But after four years they are learning to run away."



The Princess Royal presents the top award to Lindy Rodwell, who rejects notions that species should be protected by creating sanctuaries

Home Truths/Walter Ellis

## Family re-connections

My father died while I was a fledgling correspondent in Germany. He had suffered a heart attack on the afternoon of November 5, and my sister telephoned me from Belfast to warn me his condition was critical and fading. I rushed to the airport outside Bonn and caught an evening flight to Gatwick, about which I remember nothing at all.

Later, as I was driven by taxi to Heathrow for my onward connection, I noticed bonfires everywhere and suddenly realised it was Guy Fawkes Night. The taxi driver, who never stopped talking even after I told him my father was dangerously ill, cheerfully pointed out the most spectacular blazes.

British Airways, alerted to my situation, were good enough to hold up a flight for me and when I arrived at Aldergrove airport, 20 miles outside Belfast, my sister was waiting, her eyes red

with tears. I was too late, she told me. Our father, just 65 years old, had died while I was still in the air from Germany. He had asked for me and I had not been there.

That was 20 years ago. This time, my sister's phone call was about our mother, aged 82, who had been taken ill while I was home for a family visit but had appeared to be on the mend. I should come over again at once, she said: the sister at the hospital had advised her to prepare for the worst.

The problem was a previously unsuspected stomach ulcer, lodged against an artery, which had burst, causing a catastrophic series of haemorrhages. When

the first of these occurred, most of the family were out and it was my son, Jamie, aged 16, who had been the hero, sustaining his granny.

Belfast City Hospital is a world-class teaching institution, housed in a futuristic tower that dominates the landscape for a mile in all directions. The last time I had seen it close up was in the aftermath of a sectarian murder.

Installed in an intensive care ward, my mother had clearly received the best of attention. There was a lovely nurse from Wexford, she told us, and a young doctor from America. As my wife and I, with Jamie, prepared to return to London for

Christmas, there seemed little doubt she would make a full recovery. The phone call two days later from my sister was thus doubly alarming.

At this time of crisis, everything functioned like a well-oiled machine. Cars rolled between the house and the hospital virtually on an hourly basis, ensuring a steady stream of visitors to my mother's bedside.

As it turned out, she was not dying at all. Far from it. Though she had been taken to death's door, she had steadfastly refused to go through and was now sitting up in bed grumbling about her condition. She had lost mopey pints of blood and endured three painful attempts at an

endoscopy before her doctors were able to get a camera into her stomach and survey the damage.

"When I look out of that window," she said, "I can see the planes flying over the city. And I was just thinking, if one of them came down, the people inside would never have to suffer what I've suffered. It would be all over for them - bang."

Soon she had warmed to her theme. Though the other women in her ward could well have been Republicans or Nationalists, she felt no compunction about making a political analogy.

"Look at the IRA," she said, wagging her finger. "Sitting there in The Maze or out on

parole for Christmas. If they had to suffer what I've gone through, sure they'd have to think again about their old terrorism."

I knew she was going to make it after all.

Not that my sainted mother is a die-hard Unionist. Her own mother was from Sligo and she remembers as a baby being dandled on the knee of a local IRA man. At a family gathering for her 80th birthday, she shocked everyone when, in the midst of a heated discussion of the merits or otherwise of the UK Unionist Party, she suddenly proclaimed, "Brits out!"

My niece and nephews are devoted to her, as they are to their great aunt. Tales of the two

elderly sisters on their shopping expeditions in Hollywood, or further afield to Belfast and Bangor, are central to family folklore.

The pair of them can hold up checkout queues in Tesco for 10 minutes at a time as they sort their purchases and fumble for change. At home, they clean up after each other as though their reputations depended on it.

My wife has seven brothers and sisters, most of them in New York, as well as a grandma of 103 who, from her home in Boston, presides over the family with unswerving panache. The contrast with life in London is stark. Here, though we have many good friends, family is something we mainly see on sitcoms on the television.

While I don't suppose I shall ever go back home to live in Belfast, I still miss the sharing, just as I shall miss my mother when she finally consents to go... 20 years from now.



## Simon Targett on choosing the right course for better exam results

But the private sector remains the main provider of Easter revision courses. Roedean and Harrow are set to command the top end of the market: a one-week course in GCSE "double award" science costs £470, while the

An alternative is offered by Justin Craig Education, a specialist provider of Easter revision, which runs courses at nine schools, including The Mount School in York and Tonbridge School in Kent.

Beyond that, it is worth asking about the school's specialisms. Mander Portman Woodward runs A-level courses in Latin, Greek and ancient history; Davies Laing & Dick, another London crammer, runs courses in psychology.

Once a choice has been made, it remains only to quell those nagging doubts about whether a revision course is really worth the money. Everyone has to revise, but does it need to cost more than £1,000?

Marilyn Craig, who organises the Justin Craig Education courses, says that to revise properly, a student needs "somewhere quiet to work - free from telephones, door-bells and family interruptions". This sounds obvious, and it could be considered

teachers keep one eye on the school's position in the national league tables, which are growing in importance for politicians and parents. It means that schools are looking to recruit pupils with not just As but starred As. Universities, meanwhile, have

exam performance, then investment in an Easter revision course makes sense. And, after all, there is no shame in buying a little extra help. As Ms Craig says: "People say, 'Which school did you go to, not which Easter revision course did you go on.'"



**Physical Demand**

## Vicky Carlstrand discovers what prompts parents to take on the education of their own children

is withdrawn.

self "worrying constantly".

**EAS**

## STER REVISION

ON

children's choice. In fact, many chil-

01707-37185-1

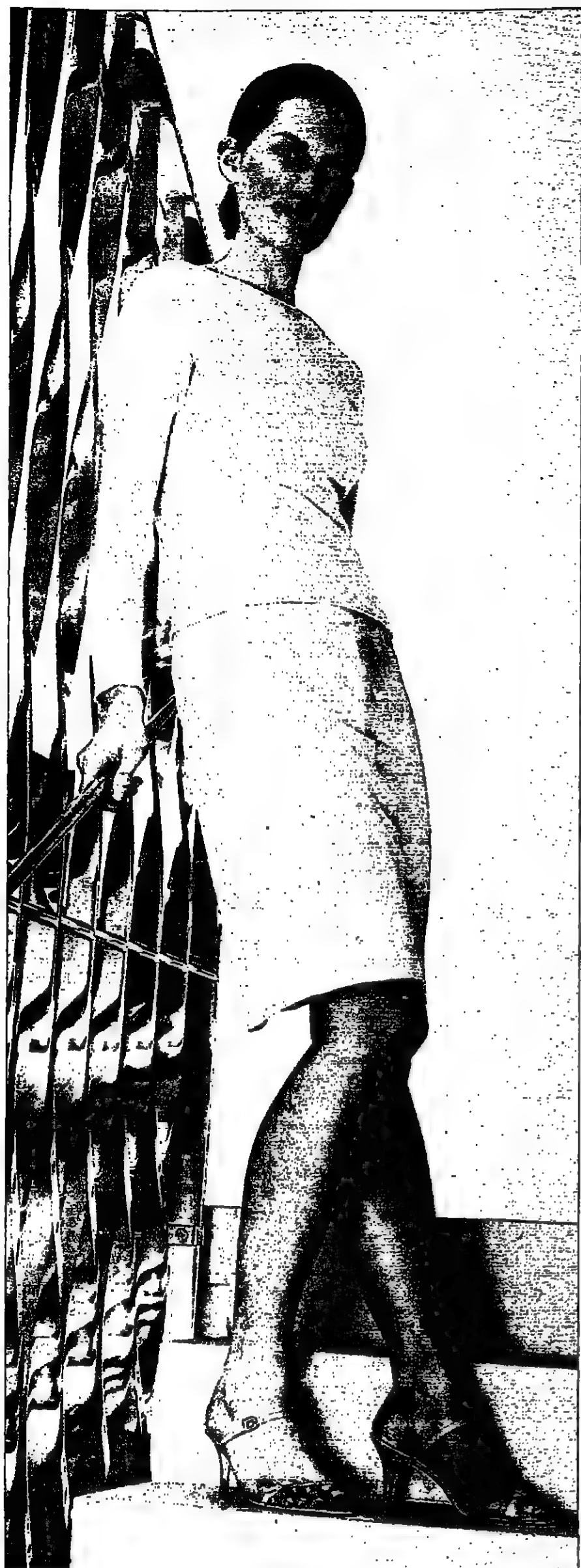
## EASTER REVISION

**Language Courses on Location**  
English, German, French,  
Spanish, Italian and Russian  
language courses for all abilities  
from beginners to advanced

**EURO LANGUAGE SERVICES &  
THE ACADEMY OF ENGLISH STUDIES**  
Tel: +44 (0)1903 306008 Fax: +44 (0)1903 248846



# How to Spend It



Clockwise from left:

□ Candy pink cashmere jumper, £285; beige suede skirt, £395, both by Lucien Pellat-Finet; also kid leather sandals with diamante buckles, £325, by Gina Couture, 9 Old Bond Street, London W1; tel 0171-408 7090.

□ Navy cashmere dress, £420, by Lucien Pellat-Finet; Tahitian pearl drop earrings on 18ct gold, £946, by Coleman Douglas Pearls, stockists: 0171-373 3369.

□ White cashmere and lurex swimsuit, £445; blue cashmere bag, £145, both by Lucien Pellat-Finet; dove grey silk sandals with diamante buckles, £325 by Gina Couture, as before; sunglasses by Web, from a selection at Harrods, Knightsbridge, SW3, tel 0171-730 1234.

Lucien Pellat-Finet is available in London (see below) and also:

□ In Paris from February 15 at 1 rue Montalembert, Paris 75007, (tel 33 1 42 22 22 27).

□ In New York at 226 Elizabeth Street, NY 10012 (tel 001 212 343 7033).

Photographer: Han Lee de Boer  
Stylist: Edwina Ings-Chambers  
Hair and Make-Up: Rae Denman  
Model: Kirsten at Maverick

Shot on location at One Aldwych, London WC2 (tel 0171-300 1000). Weekend breaks start from £220.



## Send a bunch of smackeros

Holly Finn knows where to buy flowers – for tomorrow and every day

Just a minute. Nobody's blaming you. It's been a busy week, what with the sun rising and setting, gravity pulling you down all the time, work, family, having to breathe non-stop. No worry. There is still time to smell as sweet to your love. Flowers are the first and last resort for Valentines. Though sent every day the world over, they are one of the few things in life that never lose the ability to surprise. A well-chosen bunch – gathered and given with intent, bright and bursting – is like a big fat smackeroo when you're expecting a peck on the cheek. Good flowers are effective, the anti-pack. But they must be good.

Sent to a woman or a man (who ever said the impact of blooms was oestrogen-specific?) near or far, flowers should be healthy and spectacular, ringing more bells than just the bell on the door. They die so soon after cutting, they deserve to live their last grandly, to great effect.

Calling a delivery service is an option, but often that's missing the point. Particularly now that our lives are so far-flung, it's good to know a florist you can rely on, wherever you or your love find yourselves, to deliver precisely what you ask, what you imagine.

Below, our pick of the bunch. Call them today, or next Thursday, or two Tuesdays from now, or any day. Because sometimes, only a smackeroo will do.

**LONDON**  
Kenneth Turner Ltd, 125 Mount Street, W1 (T: 0171-355 3880, F: 0171-495 1607). Prices start from £25 plus delivery. Best known for flamboyant bouquets and arrangements, which can include fruits and vegetables.  
Paula Pryke, 20 Penton Street, N1 (T: 0171-837 7338, F: 0171-837 6756). Bouquets start at £30 plus delivery. Colourful, modern arrangements with a hand-picked look.  
Woodhams, One Aldwych, WC2 (T: 0171-300 0777; F: 0171-300 0778). Bouquets start at £30 plus delivery. Specialist in minimalist shapes, with domes and lines of roses a trademark. Can deliver internationally.

Pulbrook and Gould, 127 Stone Street, SW1 (T: 0171-730 0030, F: 0171-730 0722). Bouquets start from £30, £30-£35 for hand-tied posies, £40+ for arrangements. Very loose and natural, nothing too structured.

**EDINBURGH**  
Flowers by Maxwell, 325 Castle Street, Edinburgh EH2 3HT (T: 0131-226 2866, No fax). Bouquets start at £25. Established 30 years ago today. Best known for traditional country house looks.

**NEW YORK**  
Piazza Florist, 944 Lexington Avenue, NY 10021 (T: 001 212 472 7565, F: 001 212 772 7536). Minimum order \$50. French country style, dense and colourful. James Corcoran Flowers, 1026 Lexington Avenue, NY 10021 (T: 001 212 717 5780, no fax). Bouquets start at \$75. Small and special arrangements in unusual containers such as metal nutshells or horn cups.

**SAN FRANCISCO**  
Bloomers, 2875 Washington Street, San Francisco 94115 (T: 001 415 563 3266, F: 001 415 563 3266). Bouquets start at \$45. English/French country style, mostly in clear glass vases. Classical, tasteful and understated.

**LOS ANGELES**  
Miki's Garden, 13628 Ventura Boulevard, Sherman Oaks, California 91423 (T: 001 818 906 1718, F: 001 818 366 2663). Bouquets start at \$60. Natural, loose, English garden style.

**PARIS**  
Marianne Robio, 41 rue de Bourgogne, Paris 75007 (T: 33 01 44 18 03 47, F: 33 01 45 55 29 99). Bouquets start at FF46. Unusual elements put together to create a strong statement. Très chic.

Ryu Kubota, 40 Blvd Raspail, Paris 75007 (T: 33 01 45 48 00 98, F: 33 01 45 48 02 68). Bouquets start at FF100. Contemporary Japanese. Brightly coloured orchids combined with modern French elements.

**FRANKFURT**  
Goethe Blumen, Kleine Hochstrasse 7, 60313 Frankfurt (T: 49 69 231890, F: 49 69 1310654). Bouquets start at DM60. Known for elegant and natural arrangements.  
Blumen Beucher, Rathenauplatz 2, 60313 Frankfurt (T: 49 69 282869, F: 49 69 280781). Bouquets start at DM70. Specialise in unusual colour combinations.

**MILAN**  
Carbognini, via Marconi, 12, 20133 Milano (T: 39 02 738 4837). Bouquets start at L40,000. Formal, simple and sculptural presentations.

Lami Fiori, Piazza San Marco, 8, (ang. Via Farnabeneferelli), 20121 Milano (T: 39 02 86 46 4802, F: 39 02 72 02 33 65). Bouquets start at L40,000. Rustic, loose, hand-picked style.

**HONG KONG**  
Joyce Flowers, Alexandra House, Central (T: 852 25 37 53 72). High style, high prices.

**SINGAPORE**  
Flora Dorato, House of Flowers, 9 Raffles Place, Republic Plaza 201-14, Singapore 048619 (T: 65 536 7227, F: 65 536 7227). Bouquets start at \$100. European traditional arrangements. All flowers flown in daily from the Netherlands.

**MELBOURNE**  
The Big Bunch, 578 High Street, Prahran 3181 (T: 61 03 9510 7533, F: 61 03 9510 7511). Posy boxes start at AUD30. Specialist in in-season flowers, often from the hills nearby.

Leigh Clarke at Kevin O'Neill, 119 Toorak Road, South Yarra 3141 (T: 61 03 9866 5776, F: 61 03 9867 3444). Minimum order \$375. English looks with bold use of colour. Native Australian and tropical flowers also feature.

**SYDNEY**  
Tracey Deep Florist, 223 Sutherland Avenue, Paddington (T: 61 02 9326 7321, F: 61 02 9326 1831). Bouquets start at A\$50. Unusual flowers, contemporary presentation. Arrangements are sculptural, using pods to create texture, for instance.

Grandiflora, 1/12 Macleay Street, Potts Point (T: 61 02 9357 7902, F: 61 02 9357 7904). Bouquets start at A\$40. Relaxed, garden-picked look, incorporating pods and fruit on branches.

Research: Edwina Ings-Chambers  
Flowers: courtesy of Kenneth Turner Ltd.  
Photography: Dean Balcher

## Gourmet or gastronome

Lucien Pellat-Finet has a menu for clothes buyers of either taste, says Vanessa Friedman

The world is split into two camps of clothes buyer: those who like department stores and those who like boutiques.

The former are fashion gastronomes, people who have studied their subject and know down to label and shade what they want. Their priorities are choice and efficiency and they relish the convenience of mega-stores and food halls.

The latter are fashion gourmets, people who believe in the importance of first-hand experience, for whom the process is as important as the purchase. They pledge allegiance to independent bookstores, framers, and the Bobby Baker axiom "Shopping is the perfect model for the Quest".

Whichever category you fall into, there is always a compromise. Department stores offer selection and convenience, but tend to be dizzying in their bustle and size, not to mention *laissez faire* in their help. Boutiques, on the other hand, promise quiet and personal attention (sometimes too personal), but their specificity means taxi-ing all over town to put together an outfit.

Perhaps most important:

In a department store, the collections displayed have been ruthlessly weeded out by the time they reach the rails: in a boutique, the whole dandelion-filled field is on show. The choice is between dressing yourself and being dressed. A case in point is Lucien Pellat-Finet.

The "king of cashmere" whose signature unribbed sweaters are favoured by Tom Cruise, Madonna, Brad Pitt and Charlotte, Princess Caroline's daughter, is opening his first London boutique this month. Although his wares aren't new to the capital – he's been sold here since he launched his line four years ago – the range of the collection is a revelation. You can find Pellat-Finet at Harvey Nichols, Browns, Mimi and The Cross, but you can find only a fraction of the 34-style spectrum he creates.

"A collection is like a menu: you have some appetisers, some entrées, and dessert," says Pellat-Finet, a crew-cut 54-year-old with a peripatetic past (he was a publicist, Pierre Cardin's house model, and styled shows and shoots for Kenzo and Jil Sander). He has a highly developed aesthetic sense, and a Frenchman's fondness for metaphor.

"A buyer might only want the appetiser or a dessert,

though, and London buyers in particular are very conservative. They like bread and butter."

The type of loaf they buy is determined by a very specific customer profile. Browns caters to the Scho-based media style set. According to owner Joan Burstein, these women "think about fashion, understand fabric and can assess a

**For the fashion gourmet, this is the equivalent of stumbling across a field of truffles**

garment". They have an intellectual approach to clothes. Mimi, on the other hand, is suited to a more conservative group. In the words of Mimi Lowe, Chelsea ladies who want "sensible but special clothes". The Cross buys with the eclectic, hippie-esque shopper in mind.

If you are a gastronome, having all the decisions already made, including

what to wear with what, is a dream – as long as you go to the right shop, and as long as that shop's vision of you matches your own (real or ideal).

All the shops mentioned, for example, felt that Pellat-Finet's cannibalised knit sweaters of last season (traditional from the front, adorned with a leaf on the back) were not right for their customers. Likewise, this season's cashmere bandeau bikini and one-piece after-swim lounge suit were considered too much, and luxurious 12-ply cardigans were deemed too expensive (*tant pis* for the starlets and glamour pussies among us).

As for cashmere dresses and cashmere trousers, forget it. "We concentrate on the beautiful basics," says Harvey Nichols' April Glass-bow – "the round-necked cardigan and V-necked Tee". For the customer who wanted a less basic choice, it was the Eurostar or bust.

"The thing is," says Pellat-Finet, "the stores buy for one woman. But I design for many. I got frustrated." This is where his shop comes in. Tucked down a side-street off Brompton Cross, it is like a colourful walk-in wardrobe, from the floor-to-ceiling mirror at the foot of the shop to the clementine orange and citrus green

panels on the walls (panels which will change colour according to the palette of the seasonal collection), from the cashmere swath of a curtain that shields the dressing room to the rainbow of knitwear hanging from the custom-made rails.

If there is a personality reflected by the space, it is that of Pellat-Finet himself. The almost edible colours reflect the designer's sense that "cities are dusty and grey, and clothes should be fresh and joyful; they should take you away".

That the sweaters are hung, rather than stacked, and thus temptingly browsable (no fear of unfolding and then refolding) has to do with Pellat-Finet's obsession with comfort – the reason he was attracted to cashmere in the first place – as do the soft curves of the custom-made sofa. Even the shop's small size and off-the-beaten-track location communicate Pellat-Finet's love of searching out the hidden, and the individual, whether it's the old Hermes bags he collects at flea markets or the factory in southern France which weaves cashmere the old-fashioned way.

Here there are cashmeres for women and cashmeres for men and cashmeres for children, cashmere throws and cashmere handbags and

50 من الاصل



# How to Spend It

What's more personal than your inside leg measurement? It's not something you should trust to just anyone. But what do you do if it craves professional attention, if you hanker for a \$2,000-plus Savile Row suit but lack the budget - or the gall - to pay the price?

An ill-fitting option is not the only one. A new breed of tailoring service is flexible, mobile, sometimes computerised, always attentive - and needn't cost an arm and a leg.

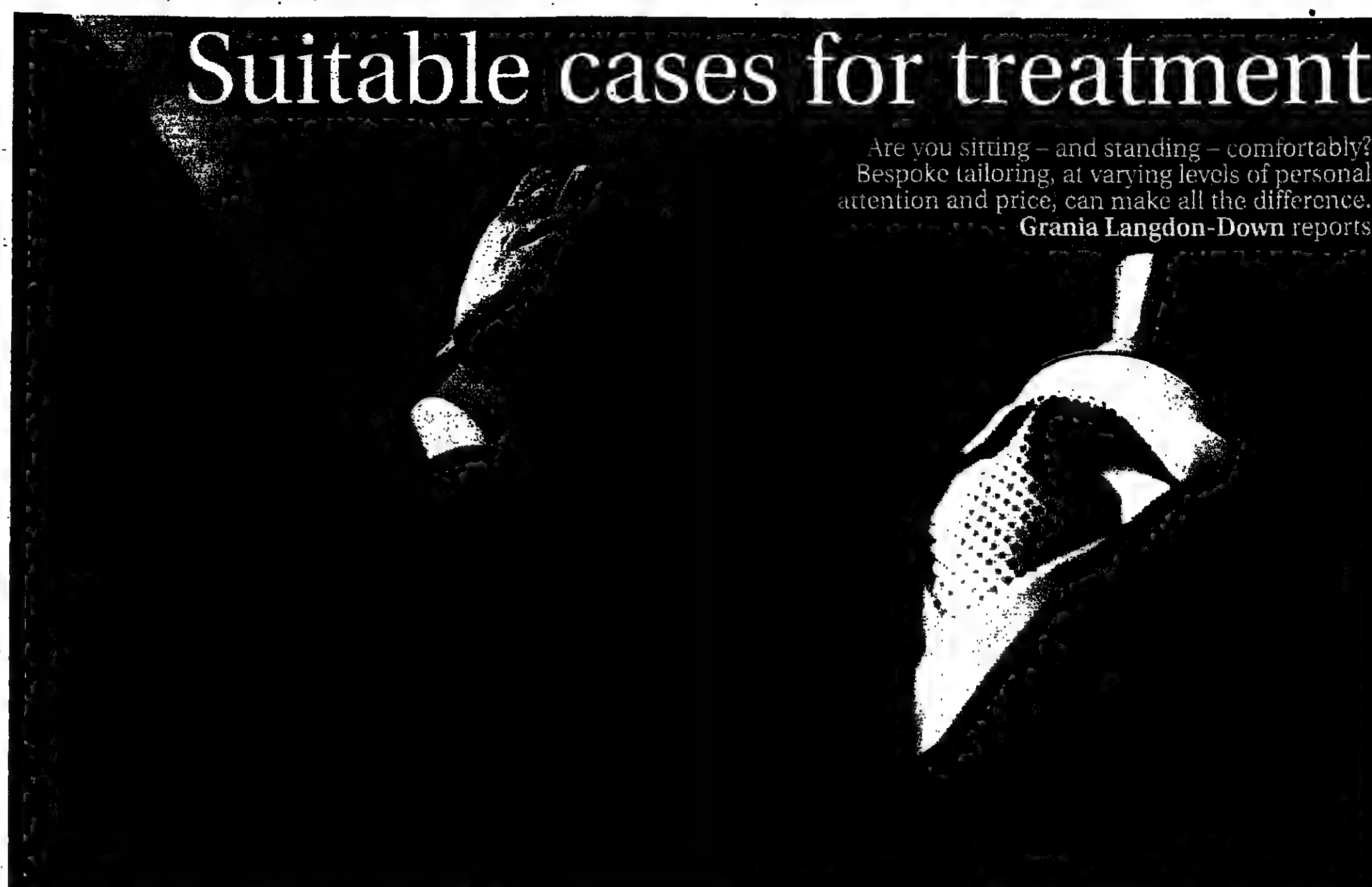
The advantages of having a suit made-to-measure have never been in doubt. An expert tailor can flatter any form - whether it's dictated by pub or gym. But the expense, and the funeral air of some tailoring shops, can make bespoke tailoring seem out of reach, an anachronism.

Hugh Holland, managing director of Savile Row tailors Kilgour French Stanbury, is well aware of the need to attract a new generation. His traditional customer is 50 or older, a man who wants something that makes a strong statement, "even if the body is showing signs of frailty." A two-piece suit that takes three or four fittings and 100 hours of hand-tailoring costs from £2,300. Younger people, who are in good shape and move fast, cannot imagine waiting so long or paying so much.

Two years ago, Kilgour launched a new service called "Special Make", which mixes old and new. Customers are measured in Savile Row. The suits are made in Shanghai. The service is a sprat to catch a mackerel, admits Holland, but at £890 for a two-piece suit, it is proving a viable business in its own right. "We hope that by making bespoke clothes more affordable and enabling someone to experience real fit, quality and choice, they will trade up to something made in Savile Row."

From the West End to the East End, Timothy Everest in Spitalfields is one of the new breed of tailors. With clients ranging from Gordon Brown, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, to actor Tom Cruise and pop star Jarvis Cocker, he offers two levels of bespoke tailoring. Fully hand-sewn service starts at £1,000 for a suit. City Line service, for just under £700, offers suits that are still cut individually and fitted, but with some machine stitching. The aim remains subtle. As Everest says: "The suit should not be more important than the man." With a background in Savile Row and retailing, Everest began his own tailoring business in an 18th century house in Spitalfields in 1990. "The problem I had was that tailoring was perceived as old-fashioned, long-winded, expensive and boring. I had to make it a serious alternative to designer labels, to make people see they were choosing something individual rather than buying into someone else's lifestyle."

Forty per cent of his clients work in the City. Most are 35 to 40, the youngest just 22. (In Japan, his clients are in their early 20s, the only age group spending money these days given the country's economic crisis.) Everest will measure customers in their offices, but he is keen they visit Spitalfields at least once to see how a suit is crafted. "It should be fun to spend money," he insists. In the tradition of Savile



## Suitable cases for treatment

Are you sitting - and standing - comfortably? Bespoke tailoring, at varying levels of personal attention and price, can make all the difference. Grania Langdon-Down reports

Clockwise from above: George Casanova, founder of Bertie Wooster, in his Fulham Road shop; Timothy Everest measures up; Selection of second-hand top hats and vintage luggage from Bertie Wooster

Row tailors, Everest travels regularly to Los Angeles, New York, Paris and Tokyo, where he bases himself in a fashion house or a hotel. Suits are measured on site, then made up in London, with fittings in between. Foreign sales now account for nearly 20 per cent of turnover.

Closer to home, George Casanova, son of the stock-broking family and cousin of

actor Christopher Casanova, runs Bertie Wooster. Once a City suit himself, pulling in a six-figure salary as a trader, he launched the company in 1990 selling second hand Savile Row-tailored suits and formal wear. In 1994 he started a made-to-measure service, at his three shops and via a 'mobile' tailor who visits home or office.

A two-piece suit starts at £350, with one fitting and a "week" on completion. "Everybody aspires to a Savile Row suit but that costs from £2,000. It will be a better suit but not £1,650 better," Casanova maintains.

Bertie Wooster's suiting service is one tier down from hand-made - stock patterns are altered to fit the individual and much of it is machine-stitched - but the attention is still personal. "Trying on a new suit for the first time is a private matter," says Casanova; "you don't want other people eyeing you up and down."

Customers include actor Daniel Day Lewis, rock musician Roger Taylor and Jack Straw, the Home Secretary. Bertie Wooster makes about 1,500 suits a year and, says Casanova: "The made-to-measure market is growing all the time. Even your barrow boy market trader now wants to be like a blue-blooded stock broker because he realises that a designer label can cost twice as much and no longer looks the part."

To look the part, another option is the personal tailoring services of some luxury men's shops. At Aquascutum, a selection of outfits is available for trying on in the shop. Matching patterns are on computer at the factory, where they can be digitally altered to meet individual requirements. Customers choose from 1,600 fabrics and add individual touches, such as a brightly coloured lining, an outside ticket pocket, even their own label. The cost ranges from £495 to £1,200, depending on the quality of the fabric.

Richard Wainwright, Aquascutum's personal tailoring co-ordinator, says the service appeals to busy profes-

sionals, such as Newswright presenter Jeremy Paxman, who wanted something with "a little bit more edge - classic tailoring with a twist to it, perhaps in the colour or the pattern". While plain navy and grey remain favourites, a growing number of customers is choosing window-pane checks in purple, electric blue

or burgundy or pinstripes with the stripes in blue or green. Four months ago, Aquascutum also started offering a hand-made service at the Regent Street store, which costs between £700 and £1,600. As Wainwright realises: "The majority of people will fit an off-the-peg suit, with adjustments, but having a suit made is some-

thing people now aspire to in their 20s and early 30s rather than their 40s or 50s." Austin Reed is another,

six years, with a suit costing from £375 to just over £600. "The suits are constructed rather than hand-cut and tailored," explains tailoring manager Brian Rouen, "but the customer adds his five pennies worth in the styling and detail."

Someone who has put far more than his five pennies worth into the new era of bespoke tailoring is the ex-bank designer Oswald Boateng. Boateng's fusion of design and classic tailoring - "bespoke couture" - has attracted a client base that reads like a who's who of Cool Britannia and still includes traditional bespoke customers from the worlds of law and finance.

Customers wanting one of his handmade suits, which start at £1,600 (compared with about £750 for one of his ready-to-wear suits), step out for a consultation at Boateng's Vigo Street shop, on the corner of Savile Row. Fittings are done at his "couture house" in Wimpole Street; the suits are made in the basement.

"Armani took the structure out of the suit. I have put the structure back in a way which is very flattering and very comfortable," says Boateng. Dressed in yellow pinstripes on a muted purple tweed with an orange polo neck, Boateng is the perfect mascot for the new breed. Vibrant, not fussy, he still shares with his predecessors the conviction that bespoke is the best. As Hugh Holland puts it: "The finest ready-to-wear is a pale shadow of good bespoke clothing."

increasingly busy, fulfiller of aspirations. Its sales of made-to-measure suits have grown by 23 per cent over the past

thing people now aspire to in their 20s and early 30s rather than their 40s or 50s." Austin Reed is another,

Stand and be delivered  
Still wondering whether it's worth the time, trouble, and money to dress on the bright, not pale, side? Well, check the depth of your pocket...

● Kilgour French Stanbury, 8 Savile Row, London W1X 1AF; tel: 0171-734 6905. Special Make from £890, five weeks to complete.  
● Timothy Everest, 32 Elder Street, London E1 6BT; tel: 0171-377 5770. Full bespoke service from £1,000, six to eight weeks; City Line from about £700, six to eight weeks.  
● Bertie Wooster, 284 Fulham Road, London SW10 9EW; tel: 0171-352 5662. 659 Fulham Road, London SW6 5PY; tel: 0171-371 0528. 89 Moorgate, London EC2R 8BH; (until June) No 2 London Wall, London EC2M 5JU (from April). Mobile service 0171-731 5772. From £350, six weeks.  
● Aquascutum - tel: 0171-675 9200 for nearest personal tailor. From £495, five weeks. Hand-tailored service: 100 Regent Street, London W1A 2AG; tel: 0171-675 9200. From £700, six to eight weeks.  
● Austin Reed: tel: freephone 0800-555 479. From £375, six weeks.  
● Oswald Boateng, 9 Vigo Street, London W1X 1AL; tel: 0171-734 6888

## Calm over troubled waters

Hydric captors bring order to the task of rehydrating your skin, finds Holly Finn

You've got to be organised these days, not just on the surface, but in the epidermis. So says Guerlain, the cosmetics company.

The worldwide launch on March 8 of its newly formulated and expanded Issima line of skincare products - which, replacing Les Gestes Pureté and Odélyes, will become its primary line - is founded on what Guerlain calls "one of the most important breakthroughs since the moisturiser". It's been named H-Captine.

In a nutshell (which is precisely the look you'd like to avoid), there is water, water everywhere but it tends to be disorderly. Really to hydrate the skin, what is needed is controlled, orderly water - water that is literally kept in line by things called hydric captors. They prevent drying and ageing.

To combat the natural depletion of these captors over time, Guerlain Labora-

tories created, and in 1997 patented, H-Captine. This complex triggers the synthesis of captors and so maintains the skin's supply not of just any old H<sub>2</sub>O molecules, but of Vital Moisture (as the company calls it).

And you thought the only water choice you had to make was still or gazeuse.

Fighting words, hydric captors. They are actually polysaccharides, many-sugared molecules. At once highly viscous and very rigid, they can hold many times their own volume of water. Useful as a lubricant, they have been applied in the treatment of joints, eyes and other parts, including the skin. But they have not yet been absorbed mainstream.

Guerlain's Issima range (Issima is Italian for "more") will soon include 23 products and looks to be the first line to mobilise captors in the fight against free radicals (the latter break captors'

sugar bonds, more frequently as you age, ruining everything). Two products in particular. Hydramythic Replenishing Hydrating Fluid with SPF 15 (30ml pump, £29.50) and Hydramythic Replenishing Hydrating Creme with SPF 10 (50 ml jar, £38), are oozing with helpful H-Captine.

After lab tests, Guerlain reported that a concentration of 1 per cent H-Captine applied to the skin increased the number of hydric captors by 55 per cent; a 5 per cent concentration by 92, and a 10 per cent concentration by 113. If you believe in sugar bonds, these are heartening (and moistening) numbers.

If, on the other hand, you want your skincare deep, but shallow, you may just be taken by Issima's new look and smell. Some of the bottles and tubes are powder-blue and made of travel-friendly plastic, others midnight-blue in glass with gold

trim. All are fully functional; if a tube is meant to stand on end, it will do so without toppling. As Roja Dove, spokesman for Guerlain, says: "There's nothing more annoying than a tube that falls over." Well, maybe global warming, but this is about the cosmetic.

Issima's full range of cleansers, toners, masks, and exfoliators, in addition to its moisture creams, is infused with a new, rosiest scent. It is very feminine, the sort of aroma that hangs around a happy woman as she sits at her dressing table, one dangle earring on, one off. The entire range has a light floral smell, which gradually dissipates in just about the time it takes to find your bottle of perfume - so there's no danger of a fragrance competition.

Another plus: since Guerlain is investing so seriously in the range, it is likely to be available everywhere for years, if not decades. Which

means another danger averted - that of discontinuation, and the hole it leaves in your regimen.

But what of the more serious threat, wrinkles? To battle against these, is more better? Does Vital Moisture work? The Hydramythic fluid and creme, certainly, turn scaly skin to silk. You can practically feel them getting your water sorted.

Drinking flushes your system but hydrating requires organisation, according to Guerlain's Dove. No bones about it. "Drink all you like," he says, "but if you don't stimulate your hydric captors, there's no point."



Unruly water: great for powerful photography and dramatic deaths - but not for skin



## FOOD AND DRINK



## My family and other memories of China

Celebrity chef Ken Hom looks at how the Chinese celebrate the future by looking at the past

**T**he Chinese new year celebration was always the biggest holiday in my family. We would pay the traditional homage to our ancestors by burning incense at the small family altar which stood at one end of the living room.

My job was to rub some honey or sugar water over the kitchen god poster on the wall so that he could report only sweet and good things to the Jade Emperor in heaven. Then the new year's food preparation would begin.

At the new year table, certain foods were always served because they symbolised particular good and noteworthy aspirations. Fish, which represents abundance and good fortune, was an essential item.

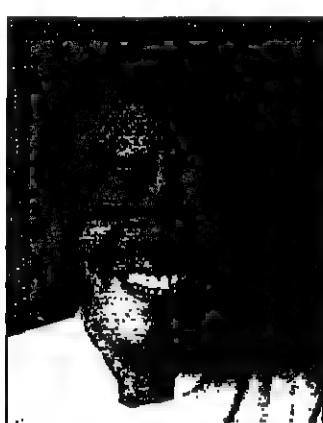
Noodles, a symbol of longevity, were always served because what good is abundance and good fortune without the time to enjoy them? My mother, being a faithful Buddhist, always made a vegetarian dish. It was a savoury vegetable casserole which I remember to this day.

In modern China it is now known as the Spring Festival. It falls, variously, between January 21 and February 19, and marks the return of the sun, the beginning of the agricultural year. As such it is pregnant with meaning, hope and desire, as well as the fatalism which is the normal lot of the peasants. It is a holiday, then, that combines the significance of the western Christmas, new year and the more pagan aspects of the Easter holiday, and it is celebrated accordingly. It has less of a religious foundation in the Chinese culture than in western culture.

Given China's geographic scope, there are regional variations in the observances of the day. It has been called the Time of Beginning, First Day, First Morning of the Year, and other such names; the northern areas are much more affected by the seasonal turns and there it is truly the start of the new year.

In any case, the holiday is seen as a time of clean slates, of fresh starts, of "out with the old and in with the new", of new resolutions and hope for auspicious omens. Many couples are married at this time.

Old debts must be repaid. Homes are thoroughly cleaned: the dust of the past must not cling. Presents are exchanged, children are given small gifts of money, families get together - in Taiwan the New Year dinner is



Ken Hom: enthusiasm for China's seasonal foods

called *wuwei*, "sitting around a stove".

The gods and ancestors are propitiated: fathers and sons go to the family grave sites or shrines to invite the ancestral spirits into the home; pictures of the deceased are hung, candles are lit before them, and incense is burnt. Prayers are intoned for peace and prosperity.

Above all, meals, feasts, and banquets, featuring specially prepared foods, are enjoyed. In China, the public holiday lasts for three days. Forget about doing any business in Hong Kong or Taiwan during the two-week new year's celebration.

In China's northern areas, the weeks before the holiday are still devoted to the preparation of the foods for the festivities. Most typical of these foods are the meat dumplings called *jiaozi*: chopped pork and cabbage, salt, ginger, spring onions, and ground white and black pepper in a thin wrapper of dough.

In some southern areas these dumplings are formed into the shape of the gold and silver ingots (*guan bao*) that were used as money in ancient China; they thus augur good fortune as well as good eating.

Large households may prepare thousands of these dumplings. If refrigeration is lacking, they are simply allowed to freeze in special racks placed in unheated rooms: it gets bitterly cold in northern China.

The dumplings thaw and reheat nicely in boiling water, and are eaten with dipping sauces and with soy sauce and other side dishes, a great time-saver. It is considered unlucky to begin the new year by working during the first few days and, furthermore, knives and scissors are to be avoided in any event: they

may cut through one's good fortune.

These dumplings are only appetisers or side dishes. Most families slaughter a pig for the main new year's feast and make bean curd, sausages and special wine for the occasion. Regular markets are supplemented by hundreds of food stalls to satisfy the demand for *nian hao* or "new year goods". The sumptuous main meal, on New Year's eve, usually begins in the late afternoon.

There will be lavish servings of vegetables (cabbage, turnips, dried mushrooms), pork, chicken, fish (the "trinity" of wealth, health and luck), and seafood, with every imaginable traditional condiment and delicacy (a favourite: thin-sliced jellyfish in vinegar and soy sauce).

Wealthier families will serve sea cucumbers, shark's fin, birds' nests, and lions' heads (giant pork meatballs). "Eight precious rice" is another traditional favourite: sweet sticky rice with lotus and almond seeds, sliced red dates, candied fruits, sweet bean paste and brown-sugar syrup. White rice is also served, as well as wine and other spirits. It all adds up to quite a feast.

Small wonder that the mouths of the kitchen god icons are smeared with honey at this time of year.

And that is only the first of a number of sumptuous feasts that follow, as distant relatives and dear friends arrive over the next few days, to help along the continuing celebrations.

This is a time, too, to enjoy all sorts of snack foods: watermelon seeds, sesame candy, sliced salted eggs, roasted peanuts, and pears, oranges, and cakes.

During this holiday period, offerings to the gods and to one's ancestors are increased and made more substantial - to give thanks for getting through another winter and to welcome in the new year as auspiciously as possible. The hope is that the gods and ancestors, pleased and impressed by such bounty, will continue the prosperity through the coming year.

In southern areas of China, where the seasonal turns are less pronounced, the new year is celebrated nonetheless. There, in the rice regions, the rice is washed clean several days before the feasts begin.

This special rice is called

"grain for ten thousand years" (*wan nian hang*) - clearly, the hope is that the new year will bring prosperity.

More than in the north, sweets such as glutinous rice pudding and pastries of all sorts abound and the new year cake, or *nian gao*, is an essential part of the celebration: any self-respecting family will have, at least, steamed cake, turnip cake, nine-layer cake and "sticky cake." I remember eating hair vegetable, also known as black moss, which is actually a type of seaweed which looks like matted hair.

All through China at this time, dates and chestnuts are consumed in abundance because the words signifying these treats are also homophones for "early" and "the coming of a son," and we know how families wish for that.

As the new millennium approaches, I wish each and every one of you good health, happiness and great prosperity, as well as tasty eating.

■ Ken Hom is a television presenter and food writer. His new book, *Ken Hom Cooks Thai* (Headline, £18.99, 234 pages) was published last week and we give one of the recipes from it below.

### Ken Hom's Chinese-style Stir-fried Chicken with Broccoli (serves 4)

**Ingredients**  
450g (1lb) boneless, skinless chicken thighs or 900g (2lb) unboned chicken thighs  
1 tablespoon light soy sauce  
2 teaspoons Shaoxing rice wine or dry sherry  
1 teaspoon salt  
1 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper  
3 teaspoons sesame oil  
2 teaspoons cornflour  
450g (1lb) fresh Chinese or ordinary broccoli  
1½ tablespoons groundnut (peanut) oil  
2 tablespoons coarsely chopped garlic  
2 tablespoons finely shredded fresh ginger  
2 large fresh Thai chillies, seeded and sliced  
2 tablespoons fish sauce or light soy sauce  
4-5 tablespoons homemade chicken stock or store-bought fresh stock or water  
2 tablespoons oyster sauce.

**Method**  
If using unboned thighs, remove the skin and bones or have your butcher do it for you. Cut the chicken into 5cm (2in) pieces. In a medium-sized bowl, combine the chicken with the soy sauce,

rice wine, salt, ½ teaspoon of the pepper, 1 teaspoon of the sesame oil and the cornflour, and mix well.

Refrigerate and marinate for 30 minutes. If you are using Chinese broccoli, cut it into 4cm (1½in) segments. If you are using ordinary

broccoli, separate the broccoli heads into small florets, then peel and slice the stems. Blanch the broccoli in boiling salted water for several minutes, then immerse in cold water. Drain thoroughly. Heat a wok or large frying pan over high heat until it is hot. Add the groundnut oil, and when it is slightly smoking, add the garlic, ginger and ½ teaspoon of the pepper. Stir-fry for a few

seconds, add the chicken, then stir-fry for 4 minutes or until the chicken is brown. Then add the blanched broccoli, chillies and fish sauce.

Add stock or water as needed. Stir-fry at a moderate to high heat for 4 minutes until the chicken is cooked and the broccoli is heated through. Add the oyster sauce and 2 teaspoons of the sesame oil and stir-fry for 2 minutes. Serve at once.

### Chinese whispers

The most enterprising diners I ever encountered were four young teenagers having lunch in the tiny Lee Ho Fook in Macleodfield Street in London's Chinatown, writes Nicholas Lander. Introduced to the world's cooking via television, they had pooled their pocket money and met during their half-term holiday for a lunch of wonton soup followed by bowls brimming with noodles, roast duck and crispy pork.

Next week, the Year of the Rabbit, coincides with many schools' half-term holidays in England. One of the great draws of Chinese restaurants is that Chinese food in Britain is often inexpensive.

At the few restaurants that breach this rule, notably the Oriental Restaurant at London's Dorchester Hotel, (tel 0171-317 5320), it will almost certainly be the cost of raw ingredients such as abalone and shark's fin which put up the prices.

However, increasingly and most regrettably, fish costs in general, particularly for sea

bass, fresh prawns and scallops, are adding to the bill.

Avoid these, drink beer or China tea - still the best accompaniment to Chinese food - and you can enjoy excellent value.

Around Soho's Chinatown head for Harbour City, 48 Gerrard Street (0171-438 7859), Chun Cheng Ku, 17 Wardour Street (437 1398) and New World, 1 Gerrard Place (434 2508) for lunchtime dim sum; Fung Shing, 15 Lisle Street (437 1539), Aroma II, 118 Shaftesbury Avenue (437 0377) and Yming, 35 Greek Street, (734-2721).

Other capital favourites are Jenny Lo's Tea House, 14 Ecclestone Street, SW1 (259-0359) and, around Baywater, W2, Mandarin Kitchen, 14 Queensway (727-9012), Lee Fook, 98 Westbourne Grove (727-0099), and Royal China, 13 Queensway (221-2535). Royal China has an even noisier branch at 40 Baker Street, W1, (487-3123).

### Restaurants

## Why Manchester can't be Manhattan

Nicholas Lander's visit to his home city is far from an unqualified success

I lunched at Manchester's new restaurant, The Reform, before hearing mutterings of discontent about it at a professional gathering in the city that evening.

There were one or two phrases a restaurant writer never likes to hear. The first is: "Yes, I've heard it's not that good. I would have gone to... instead." The second, perhaps more ominous, is: "I hear it's very good but I haven't been there."

Even if I had heard what proved to be accurate appraisals of The Reform restaurant I would still have wanted to visit for myself. Set in the former Reform Club, established in the Victorian era by the city's practitioners of free trade, this institution subsequently became a gentlemen's club. L.S. Lowry, the painter, was an habitué.

The main room, now a bar and restaurant, retains its splendid ceiling and walls. However, a combination of dark pink curtains, brown tiger-skin fabric on the chairs and banquettes and second-rate Renoir and Van Gogh reproductions on the walls

and a feeble stereo system destroy all vestiges of charm. I felt very sorry for William Gladstone, whose statue stands in a corner, presumably too big and too heavy to be moved from this modernist mishmash.

Had The Reform's modern setting delivered top quality modern British cooking I would not have been as upset, but what I was offered was a litany of poor produce, amateurish cooking and friendly but unprofessional service.

The tarragon cream with my mussels was fine but the mussels were tough and chewy and I left more than half. The waiter did not seem either to notice or care. My grilled fillets of red mullet, a fish so delicate that it should barely be cooked at all, had been so overcooked that they were

shrivelling up to meet in the middle, yet the kitchen had managed to undercook the sliced vegetables underneath. I left most of both and again the waiter said nothing. My dessert, a safran (sic) - this should have read saffron - of mango and ginger was, however, the worst of the lot. The saffron dough was too heavy to eat, the mango slices upright and the ginger came in one unappetising chunk.

I pointed out its inedibility to the waiter by sticking my fork into it and banging it against the plate. He apologised but did not take it off the bill. The Reform also fails to close off the credit card slip properly. I am told that towards the end of the week the bar is a fun, crowded place but, the next time I am hungry in Manchester, I will follow some

belated advice and eat instead at the new Lincoln Restaurant at 1 Lincoln Square (tel: 0161-834 9000).

My journey north also took me to Juniper, a Michelin-starred restaurant in the wealthy commuter town of Altrincham, north Cheshire, ten miles outside Manchester.

Everything eaten and drunk there was distinctive, well-chosen and well-executed. Paul Kitching, the chef, has a very fine touch - with fish in particular. Three small fillets of Dover sole layered with courgettes and spring onions was a dramatic first course, and two main courses, sea bass with cardamom cream and Cornish cod with orange and parsley butter, glistened with freshness. Best of all, was a bouillon of

white chicken and dried vegetables with wild mushrooms.

Although my companions and I ordered individual desserts, spoons were soon moving in all directions as his signature dish, a rice pudding soufflé with rosemary ice cream, a refreshing lemon tart and a milk chocolate tart with rum and raisin ice cream, came to sudden, very sticky ends.

Juniper's wine list also contains bottles of equally distinctive flavour and character, particularly a 1996 Ribolla Giallo from Friuli £22, all similarly fairly priced.

My only reservation about recommending Juniper wholeheartedly - and it is a serious one - is its price. Kitching's set dinner menu,

costing £36.50 for three courses, including coffee and wonderful petits fours but excluding service, is just too expensive.

It is not only high by local standards, it is as high as the most expensive London menu prices and its equivalent in France would buy a top tasting menu that would almost certainly include *amuse-bouche*, a cheese course and service. In dollars, Kitching's price would put him at the top end of the price scale in Manhattan's restaurants.

I am convinced that Kitching wants to buy only the best produce and that he is not getting rich on his share of Juniper's profits. We were among only a dozen customers, of whom three seemed to be Kitching's friends, and that on

the day after local papers had praised the restaurant for retaining its Michelin star.

Kitching's cooking skills deserve a much wider audience but he, or Juniper's owners, must employ a fresh initiative. Perhaps they could follow the example of Alice Waters, the great chef at Chez Panisse in Berkeley, California.

When her set-price dinner menu proved too costly she introduced a sliding scale. She cut menu prices by 40 per cent on Mondays and Tuesdays, judiciously using less expensive ingredients but always opting for freshness, and then raising prices towards the more popular end of the week.

Such a policy might well work for Mancunians who love a bargain. I should know - I am one.

■ Juniper, 21 The Docks, Altrincham W14 2AQ. Tel: 0161-929 4008. Closed Saturday and Monday lunchtimes and Sundays.

■ The Reform, King Street, Spring Gardens, Manchester M2 4ST. Tel: 0161-639 9966. Closed Sundays.

John Co. 1550







## TRAVEL

# Jewels among the cranes and concrete mixers

A confident Barbados is resistant to global recession, says Alan Ponsford

It had gone. Eradicated. Obliterated. Vanished into warm air. So, too, had all those affluent beautiful people who had graced its coral-stone portals.

Where was the cluster of royal blue deckchairs and umbrellas which had splattered that broad, now empty, Barbados beach? And those ranks of tinkered pink bodies?

One of the world's poshest hostels has been razed to well below the ground. Packed in, around and over a vast gaping hole were cement mixers, cranes and all the other paraphernalia of construction.

The new, even grander Sandy Lane was starting to rise on the footprint and in the image of the old, hoping for a pre-millennium reopening.

When they troop back after more than 18 months' eviction, loyal customers will find standards of escapism raised to new heights. Apart from its central Palladian-style rotunda and most of the gardens' huge mahogany trees, Sandy Lane will have been totally recreated, albeit much in its former spirit and architectural style.

In place of 120 bedrooms will be 112, virtually suites nearly the length of a cricket pitch, and claiming "every accoutrement of modern life", including "a desk equipped as a communications centre with e-mail and internet linkage", and bathrooms with Jacuzzis.

The swimming pool will have been supplanted by a full-blown, multi-purpose spa, and two new championship golf courses will be in the making.

This \$100m bet on a continued soaring of Barbados' visitor trade is one of many demonstrations of confidence that, whatever else is affected by looming global recession, it will not be the top end of the island's market.

Up the coast from Sandy Lane, another building site has taken over one end of the spacious gardens of the Coral Reef Club. I fell in love with this well-qualified member of Small Luxury Hotels of the World, in its early days, not long after Budge and Cynthia O'Hara had come out from England to run it in the 1960s.

Then it had 40 bungalows spread across ample lawns and was creating the caring, smart-casual ambience that was to bring generations back year after year.

When the young O'Haras had the chance to buy into the property they borrowed \$600 from Cynthia's mother and a bit more. Eventually the family became sole owners and renowned among West Indian hoteliers.

Since Budge died a few years ago, Cynthia has delegated to her three children and their spouses most of the day-to-day running of Coral Reef and their neighbouring smaller hotel, the equally stylish Sandpiper Inn.

The place has grown from time to time, but even with this latest \$10m extension and rejuvenation, will still number only 85 rooms and suites.

The two O'Hara properties and, towards the north of the island, Cobblers Cove, are the *crème de la crème* of Barbados' hotels, managing to combine maximum low-key elegance and charm with a lack of ostentation.

At Cobblers Cove, the ever-solitious Hamish Watson runs a 40-suite gem that has no room to expand, even if he wanted to. His faithful clientele provide near-full houses in the winter and good summer trade. But he is more cautious than most about the continuing willingness of financially challenged Brits to splash out on far-away holidays.

He and other top hoteliers have seen the flip side of that flattering return business - the risk of sustaining shrinking seniors' clubs. So there is widespread activity to attract younger professionals, not just with comprehensive electronic communications, but with expanded water-sports and sophisticated food.

There was no such caution to be found at the third site. This is the subject of much local debate



Barbadians' laid-back lifestyle, as well as the island's beautiful beaches and fine hotels, draw visitors back year after year

Courtesy: Terry Amara

## General Information

■ Tour operators such as Caribbean Connection offer seven-night holidays, including economy class air travel, at Cobblers, Coral Reef and Sandpiper for about £2,000 a person in the winter season (mid-December to mid-April), more if you travel business class, more again if you use the Saturday Concordia flights. Two weeks would be about £3,500. During the rest of the year prices are between £1,100 and £1,400 for seven nights. Sandy Lane and Villa Nova can certainly be expected to cost more.

and some scepticism. For never before has there been a first class hotel on the east side of the island, off the beach what's more, in secluded countryside.

Along the much-developed west coast most days an apathetic Caribbean Sea lumps on to pale coral sand, inviting languid swimming and snorkelling.

On the beautifully rugged east coast the convulsive Atlantic sends foaming breakers into a dramatic, largely deserted shoreline. But Peter Bowling has total

confidence that his Villa Nova, once the winter hideaway of Lord Avon (former prime minister Sir Anthony Eden) in his retirement, will succeed as a country house retreat offering tranquillity and shameless comprehensive luxury.

It is another \$10m venture. Much of the mid-19th century plantation house has been gutted for restoration and extension in its original form, with polished hardwood floors and colonial furniture.

At 900ft above sea level it will

enjoy cool breezes in which to stroll or jog through 14 acres of lush vegetation frequented by (charless) leaping monkeys. The surroundings are rich in beauty spots, viewpoints and historic houses and churches.

Bowling has found a calm spot on the east coast for a beach club. Guests will be taken there by Mercedes. Alternatively, they can choose the west coast for a picnic venue, where the chauffeur-waiter will set things up and pour the first drinks before leaving them to it.

All this cossetting is for the occupants of just 17 suites of varying dimensions.

Visitors may well try to get a game of golf at the fourth construction site, Royal Westmoreland. However, the owners of its gleaming white villas, which have been selling at well over \$1m, have begun to want the courses to themselves. Here, too, it is judged there will be plenty of takers for the further houses now going up.

Tourists will usually have to make for the two new 18-hole courses being spread over 600 acres of former sugar cane fields by Sandy Lane. The first will be open to the public, the second to the hotel's guests and residents of yet more high-priced villas to be built around it.

Sandy Lane provided us with a final day of old and new. Hearing the first nine holes of the original course were open, we seized the chance if only for the delight I remembered at the short seventh. Its 119 yards length appears at first sight to be matched by the elevation of the tee above the green so it seems you are driving off a cliff.

There followed the most superb dinner of many on the island - in the golf clubhouse, where Sandy Lane's German chef has established The Restaurant as a testing ground for the gastronomy with which he will spoil the hotel guests. Barbados optimists have no doubt there will be lots of them.

## HOLIDAYS & TRAVEL

### SOUTH AFRICA



SPEND A FEW DAYS EXPLORING THIS EXCITING AND BEAUTIFUL COUNTRY. AFTER FLYING SOUTH AFRICAN AIRWAYS FROM HEATHROW, YOUR TAILOR-MADE ITINERARY COULD TAKE IN HISTORIC CAPE TOWN, THE CAPE WINELANDS, THE INDIAN OCEAN BEACHES AND A SAFARI LODGE. 11 NIGHTS AT TABLE MOUNTAIN LODGE AND PHINDA PRIVATE GAME RESERVE FROM £2715. BUSINESS CLASS UPGRADABLE FROM £385.

**Elegant Resorts**  
01244 897 888

CAPE TOWN, CLIFTON & LAKENHAM.  
Hotels and quality 500, 500 views.  
Tel: 0181 4082107 Fax: 0181 7152231

### J&C Voyageurs

Exclusive value for small groups.  
Specialist safari guide & vehicle.

• South Africa  
• Kenya • Tanzania • Zambia

• Botswana • Malawi • Zimbabwe  
Luxury accommodation in either hotels or mobile tented camps. Tailor-made itineraries away from the tourist traps.

Tel: 01235 848747  
Fax: 01235 848840

J&C Voyageurs, Beckenham, Kent.  
Safari Company, Alton, Hampshire.  
Flights are arranged in strict agency of The Centre Corporate Ltd ATOL No 249 Fully Bonded

### UK

Welcome to the Isles of Scilly - a mere 28 miles off the Cornish Coast and easily accessible by sea and air. Literally 'A World Apart' a cluster of unspoiled islands, many totally deserted.

For details: Dept. 11, Isles of Scilly Initiative, Portludra, St Mary's, Isles of Scilly  
Tel: 01770 422536 Fax: 422949 Email: scilly@scillyinitiative.co.uk

Isles of Scilly  
Simply Scilly  
Simply Perfect

## KUONI

Dream holiday, think Kuoni

Sales: 01306 740500 Fax: 01306 740719

www.kuoni.co.uk email: sales@kuoni.co.uk

Brochure: 08700 745864

...Tailormade holidays at package tour prices

Voted by travel agents 'Britain's Best Longhaul Tour Operator' for the past 17 years

### TURKEY

## Cycle Turkey



A challenging bike ride to the Temples of Turkey

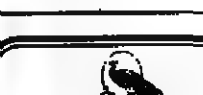
27 September - 3 October 1999  
3 October - 10 October 1999

Are you ready for a challenge? This exciting journey will take you back in time as you cycle from the battlegrounds of Gallipoli, past the giant wooden horse of Troy to the ancient city of Ephesus. Just picture yourself cycling 85km a day through traditional Turkish villages, in the warm autumn sun. Sound good?

Join this exciting adventure and help us save babies' lives by raising funds for cot death research and support.

For your info pack call 0171 823 2216 or write to FSID at 14 Halkin St, London, SW1X 7DP.

The Foundation for the Study of Infant Deaths  
Registration fee £200, Sponsorship £2,000  
Reg charity no 362191



### FRANCE

COTE D'AZUR & PROVENCE Unique collection of villas & country houses with pools, some with tennis. Lavandou, St Tropez, St Malin, Grasse, Cannes & Hyères. Provence, Balfour France 0188 402620.

PROVENCE & ST TROPEZ VILLAS & chalets with pools, most styled & village houses. Provence, St Tropez, Cote d'Azur, Dordogne, Gascogne, the Alps and other regions. The best properties are in the French Châteaux brochure. Tel: 0171 7220722 Email: info@villarentals.com

FRENCH CANALS. Séville 2-12 berth Penchettes from 23 bases all over France. Brochure - French Country Canals, 01872-821330 ATOT ATOL.

### YACHTING

## YACHT CONNECTIONS

AFFORDABLE CREWED YACHTS WORLDWIDE

Cruise the Caribbean, Mediterranean, Seychelles & South Pacific.

All yachts and crews personally known to us.

Tel: 01590 671667  
Fax: 01590 671668

### PRIVATE YACHT CHARTER

Luxury crewed yachts - both sail and power - in the 40-200ft range and of the very highest calibre available for charter Mediterranean, Caribbean and worldwide.

Crestar Yachts Ltd  
Colegate Street, 125 Sloane Street  
London, SW1X 9AU  
Tel: 0171 730 9962  
Fax: 0171 824 8691  
Email: charter@crestaryachts.com Member of MYBA

### CRUISES

## 5\* HANSEATIC

Once in a lifetime offer! Deluxe 180 passenger ship, 6th March 23rd. Fly-cruise. Entirely wild-life centred in Cape Town, S. Africa, Madagascar, Aldabra Atoll, Seychelles etc. only £2750pp! (incl. cabin, safaris & expeditions included) WWF of USA licensees.

Highdays Travel  
0181 668 2043

LUXURY CRUISES by true specialists. Savings or enhancements on every cruise. FREE air. Cruises & Voyages Ltd 0181 445 0445 Fax: 0181 491 6677. Website: www.cruisesandvoyages.com Email: info@cruisesandvoyages.com

### BALEARICS

BEAUTIFUL Villages with pools in Ibiza & Mallorca. In unspoiled locations, most staffed. The best properties are in Spanish Châteaux brochure. Tel: 0171 7220722 Email: info@villarentals.com

### GERMANY

GERMANY - Daily low cost flights and hotel accommodation. All major German Travel Centres 0181 421 2000 ATOL 8008 ATOL 2877 ATOL. Open 7 days a week.

### SAFARIS

## TAILORMADE SAFARIS

ZIMBABWE BOTSWANA NAMIBIA ZAMBIA KENYA TANZANIA SOUTH AFRICA

Luxury safari lodges. Wildlife, canoeing, riding and vehicle safaris with the very best guides. Superb wildlife. Adventure with comfort. Call us to create your ideal safari.

Tel: 01494 628579 Fax: 01494 628579  
Safari Drive, 100, Northampton, NN1 2EX

AFRICA EXCLUSIVE

## Safari Drive

Tanzania Namibia Botswana and Zimbabwe

Call for a brochure 01488 681611  
Fax: 01488 685055  
Safari Drive, 100, Northampton, NN1 2EX

## AFRICA

Tailormade Safaris with

ZIMBABWE BOTSWANA NAMIBIA ZAMBIA KENYA TANZANIA SOUTH AFRICA

Enjoy luxury and seclusion in exclusive camps and lodges. Top lodges, superb game viewing from vehicles, boats, on foot or on horseback. Follow the wild with a week on a tropical island.

Tel: 01488 681611 Fax: 01488 685055  
Email: safari@tailormadesafaris.com

JOINT VENTURE TRAVEL, PLC ATOL 4814

### PORTUGAL

LUXURY WORLDWIDE HOLIDAYS

Le Marquis Dona Filipa, GRAY PROSPECT BEACHES, SUPERS, ACCOMMODATION AND PORTUGAL'S FINEST GOLF COURSE. 7 NIGHTS FROM £2500 WITH 14 CLUB CLUBS (INCLUDES FROM £130).

01244 897 777

ATOL 2882

BEAUTIFUL MANOR houses & cottages, most styled & with pools. Northern & Central Portugal & Western Algarve. The best properties are in the Portuguese Châteaux brochure. Tel: 0171 7220722 Email: info@villarentals.com

### ITALY

## Walk through Europe

Independently with easy-to-follow route booklets and a Route Manager on call.

Escorted: highest quality walking trips in Europe.

ALTERNATIVE TRAVEL GROUP

01865 315663

ATOL 2618

### SKIING

## BIGFOOT TRAVEL

Tailor made holidays in luxury new chalets. Central location. CHAMONIX

Private in resort transport, arrival and departure dates to suit

Tel: 01491 579 601

## LUXURY SKI

THE HEIGHT OF ELEGANCE FROM THE ALPS TO THE ROCKIES. 7 NIGHTS FROM £715.

Elegant Resorts

01244 897 333

ATOL 2738

### Switzerland

## Experience the Winter Wonderland

18 resorts, weekend breaks special discounts and lots more.

PLUS TRAVEL

Call now for any Winter 98/99 brochures

0171 259 0199

VAL D'ISERE AND COURCHEVEL, quality chalets. Travel by air, train or self-drive call Plus 01835 800282

MERIBEL. Fabulous snow, fantastic prices. Luxury chalet holidays. 2 for 1 on 18th March. Call Meribel 01451 843100 ATOL www.meribel.co.uk

VAL D'ISERE/MERIBEL - Luxurious chalets with unforgettable service, superb food & fine views. Free 8th pass 14 & 21 March. Call The Ski Company on 01451 84312 ATOL

### ITALY

Some of the finest private villas & farmhouses, with swimming pools, some with T. Courts, throughout Italy. Unrivalled local knowledge of each property.

TUSCANY NOW

Tel: 0171 272 5469

F 0171 272 6184

BRIDGEWATER'S lovely holiday, 26 years experience countryside to coast. The complete selection. Private villas, farmhouses, castles, apartments and hotels. Tuscany, Umbria, Lazio, Campania, Rome ABTA 02019 Tel: 0161 707 8795. www.bridgewatertravel.co.uk

INVITATION TO TUSCANY From simply delightful to elegantly grand. One hundred properties for rental. Brochure 0121 429 5016 or 0171 803 7111

TUSCANY & THE ADRIATIC COAST Villages, farmhouses & apartments, many with pools, most staffed. Tuscany, Umbria, Piedmont & Capri, Rome, Florence, Venice. The best properties are in the Italian Châteaux brochure. Tel: 0171 7220 722 Email: info@villarentals.com

FARMHOUSE BY THE SEA. On Monte Argentario, a wild and beautiful corner of Tuscany 2 hrs N of Rome. Built into the mountains just above the sea, a 5 min walk to the beach. Other villas for 2-14. Villa Argentario. Tel: 0181 387 8619, Fax: 0181 747 8543.

NEW ZEALAND

LUXURY WORLDWIDE HOLIDAYS

Tailor-made itineraries with all NEW ZEALAND flights from Heathrow and your choice of LUXURY holiday homes. 11 nights FROM £2335.

Elegant Resorts

01244 897 888

ATOL 2888



## TRAVEL

The Caribbean island of Anguilla springs many surprises, considering that it is merely a barren lump of coral rock. James Henderson explains why

Time was, not so long ago, that lobsters were considered fit only for pigs and prisoners. Not so now, of course. They are the most expensive dish on the Caribbean menu. You would not want to leave Anguilla without trying a local lobster, though. Or possibly their smaller relative, the salt-water crayfish. The island is famous for them.

Anguilla itself is an island worth bearing in mind. It is a Caribbean promise – escape, luxury in a fine climate, even a little sophistication – Anguilla comes closer to it than just about anywhere else in the islands. What is so surprising is why. The island is scrubby and flat, basically a barren lump of coral rock. And, worryingly when it comes to food, British to boot.

Yet Anguilla has a small clutch of superb hotels and, unexpectedly, a handful of seriously good restaurants. In the island's favour are magnificent beaches and the fact that the Anguillians are utterly charming. Unlike so many West Indians, they do not seem to have a problem with service. But Anguilla has gone, consciously, for the top of the market. It has kept away mass tourism for the moment and so there are no casinos or cruise ships.

So I found myself doing the rounds of the restaurants, chasing lobster and crayfish. An interesting day out is at "Gorgeous" Scilly Cay, an offshore bit where "Gorgeous" Wallace, a former tennis professional, has a bar and daytime restaurant. It is a bit rough and ready, but that is its charm.

We arrived by motorboat, via a snorkeling trip in Little Bay, where hundreds of thousands of fish fry swirled around us like wisps of mist. Lunch was served to the sounds of an Anguillian scratch band – guitars, maracas,



Cap Jaha, one of Anguilla's small clutch of superb hotels and surprisingly good restaurants

Links: Murray/Robert Harding Picture Library

## Life's a beach for lobster lovers

led banjo and a bass played on an upturned washbucket with a broom handle and string – lobster salad, with slightly curried, firm and strong-tasting flesh.

Of course there is far more than lobster to Anguilla. Directly opposite Scilly Cay is one of my favourite spots, Elbeira, which is run by a French and Irish couple. Every other summer, when they close up for the low season, they head off to a different part of the Far East for some culinary exploration. This year they have sprinkled their menu with tastes from China, so their cream of leek soup is now perfumed with green tea and the fillet of snapper is served with Sichuan sauce.

Back at Cap Jaha, my hotel, I was surprised to hear English vowels in the fitness centre. Caradigan Connor, an Anguillian by birth, spends summers away from the island for a different reason. For the past 14 years he has played top class cricket in England. Now he spends his winters working as a masseur, turning the strength of his fast bowl-

er's fingers to the knots in visitors' muscles. He's working on island cricket, too.

Dinner that night was a tasting menu at the hotel restaurant, Pimms. We sat among slender columns at the head of the bay, looking along the curved line of the beach, where the villas stood, their curious Moorish roofs glowing white in the moonlight. Seven dishes, with a magnificent lightness of touch, and again with a French and eastern influence, graced the table – snapper Chinoise, lobster spring roll, tenderloin served with foie gras and a truffle sauce, oyster and caviar wrapped in salmon...

Some of these ingredients came as a surprise in the Caribbean, but Anguilla benefits from an accident of geography when it comes to supply. Nearby St Maarten is supplied daily from Florida, so Anguillian chefs can order whatever they want. It is then expedited by Anguillian Customs so that it does not spoil. Everywhere I went in Anguilla trails led back to a British man,



Leon Royden, who is a father of Anguillian tourism. When he visited in the early 1980s he realised that the beaches were some of the best he had seen in the world. So he decided to build a hotel. He set a standard of comfort – bathrooms big enough to live in – that was unknown in the Caribbean then. Over the years I must have spent thousands of hours

inspecting hotels around the Caribbean but wandering around Bellinobana with Leon Royden is still a pleasure. As he walks and talks, his heady eye is roving over every corner.

The thing he most wanted to create was a dining room that could rate with the restaurants of Europe (also pretty much unheard of in the British Caribbean at the time). It would be fair to say that he succeeded. Certainly you get a superb meal. The setting is magnificent, on a cliff-top looking north and west, the fare classical French with some concessions to the climate.

Presented in true French style – *les potages, les frites gras, les asperges* – Malibu's menu is long enough that there is no need to repeat a dish even in a two-week stay. Understandably though, visitors, many of them wealthy Americans with sophisticated palates, want a change and are keen to eat out. Over the years places have sprung up for them. Now there are six or seven superb restaurant kitchens

around the island. Anguillian chefs just keep winning awards.

Not far off is Blanchard's, where Bob and Belinda Blanchard have an open-sided dining room within earshot of the sea and a delightful, mixed menu. Their favourite dishes remain the lobster cakes and the fillet mignon of tuna (marinated in Japanese teriyaki sauce, sherry and fresh lemon juice, but new for this year are the giant warm blinis and a cracked coconut desert (a chocolate shell rolled in roasted coconut, filled with coconut ice cream). Along with Malibu's, Blanchard's is one of just five Caribbean wine cellars that have the *Wine Spectator's* Award of Excellence.

Where most restaurants sit on the coast, Kool Keel uses the charming setting of a restored local house, now a lovely fusty-smelling rum shop, and its yard. Here Anguillian chef Leonard "Smoke" Sharples (all West Indians have a nickname) offers an Anguillian degustation menu of five courses and a tasting

menu in seven.

Smoke sometimes uses the original local food, the local oven. His summers are spent in France and he feeds that through into his dishes. He also likes to use Anguillian ingredients so there are some unexpected combinations – smoked conch and caper ravigote with chive butter sauce or poppyseed baby rock snapper with risotto butter sauce. Dinner finishes with rum from around the Caribbean in the rum shop.

But I still hadn't tried crayfish. They are smaller and more delicate than lobsters, which can seem stringy by comparison. So Smoke cooked me some, as simply as they come – grilled and served with lemon butter. Superb. And not bad for convict food, either.

James Henderson travelled to Anguilla with *Horizon* Worldwide Travel (call 01708-850300) and stayed at Cap Jaha. During February, seven nights in luxury room at Cap Jaha, £2,858 per person, including air fare, transfers and continental breakfast.

## Now I'm the high-wire king of the jungle

Walter Glaser has a bird's eye view of Costa Rica's rainforest

From an 88ft-high platform in a Costa Rican rainforest, I looked down at the jungle floor and wondered what I was doing here.

In front of me, a thin-looking wire stretched into the forest canopy. I felt a tap on the shoulder. The others on the platform were looking at me. Time to launch. My toes lost contact with the sturdy timber boards, whizzed over the trees, and the adrenaline started to flow.

When we booked our Costa Rican cruise on the Wind Song, a computer-operated, four-masted, sailing cruise ship, we had expected luxury but not adventure.

The ship has won several awards for stylish cruising. It carries a maximum of 150 passengers and can take you into ports and bays inaccessible to larger vessels.

Costa Rica is known for its well-protected plants and animals and we had looked forward to exploring its tropical coastline. Then we saw in the brochure the following on-shore excursion: "Tree-top Canopy Tour... a scenic drive of about two hours will transport you from sea level to the 2,000 feet high Rincon de la Vieja National Park."

It added: "You will be hanging from the trees between platforms, providing you with not only an exceptional view of the forest, but with a mysterious wonder, experiencing the



sights and sounds of the tropics. Recommendations: insect repellent, camera and long pants and NO FEAR OF HEIGHTS."

I was hooked. As we came ashore that morning, our bus was waiting. Soon the banana plantations of the coast gave way to cattle and coffee, and eventually we could see the rainforest that covers the mountains.

Inside the forest we reached a small motel-type hostel which was to be our base. Here we were taken over by our "minders", a group of well-built Costa Ricans who began to kit us out with a type of harness more suitable for rock climbers. We were told to leave behind hats, sunglasses and anything that could fall from our pockets.

General

Costa Rica discover that and safe. A brilliant holiday. For more Costa Rica and Kent, Slide the US: Abernethy Kensington Road 930 854 2844, 300 Elliott Avenue 5318, fax +1 202 462 4600, costarica.com. For land Costa Rica, tel +506 222 4600, mcostarica.com 4600.

We began climbing a mountain track at a pace more appropriate for army trainees. Occasionally we stopped at a tree to be told about its special importance. As we went on, the trees became higher. First 50ft, then 60, then 120, as the narrow, twisting path went deeper into the jungle.

Then we saw it – a tree 200ft tall, with an 80ft high ladder to a platform. "Who wants to go first?" our guide asked. In good English. Silence. "OK then! You – that group of eight over there can lead the way!"

I was trapped. A rope was looped through the harness of one of the group. "We haven't had any accidents here, and don't want to start with you," said the guide. When my turn came, all eyes were on me, wondering whether this gaunt little fellow would make it. Halfway up, the same question was in my mind.

After an eternity, I clambered on to the platform. One of the four leaders clipped his harness pulley on to the braided steel cable running into the jungle canopy from our tree. "Lean back so that you are always feet-first as you travel along the wire. Don't start to spin and don't hit any of the trees that you pass," our minders advised. "Now put on the leather gloves we gave you. They are for braking. If you find yourself going too fast, slow yourself down by lightly rubbing your glove against the

wire. But don't grab it too hard. I'll be at the other end waiting for you. My buddy will see you off."

Fortunately, there was no time to think. The pulley was snapped on, and before I knew what I was doing, I was racing down the wire at surprising speed. From 60 ft in the air one does get a fabulous view. Trees loom all around, the vegetation below seems impenetrable. Butterflies flit from vine to vine, and huge-headed toucans glide from tree to tree.

But on my first ride I noticed none of this. All I seemed to hear was the screaming of the pulley. Then I made my mistake.

I grabbed the wire too firmly and thought my arm was being pulled of its socket. That slowed me, causing me to come to rest at the lowest spot in the sagging wire and there was not enough momentum to carry me to the platform 30ft away. "Swing round so that you are head-first toward the platform," called the guide.

"That's good! Now pull on the wire hand over hand and drag yourself up to the platform. You can do it quite easily." When I finally clambered on to the platform, I had a warm feeling of achievement. Tarzan had nothing on me.

Too soon, I looked for the ladder from this second tree to the ground level. But there was none. Instead, there was a ladder to a second ledge 30ft higher and then another thin wire into the jungle.

In fact, there were another 15 sections of wire. Everyone would have to do the whole stretch, we were told. Fortunately, the next section was far less daunting. By the time I was on the fourth stretch it began to seem easy. By the fifth I was looking around and admiring the rainforest.

At platform 16 it was all over. Down ladder and back to the bus. We unwound over a barbecue-style lunch, downed some beer and returned to the ship. There were several more excursions, all enjoyable. But the high-wiring will be remembered longest.

## CARRIBEAN

## CARIBBEAN

### Summer value at Royal St Lucian

An opportunity to enjoy luxury and refinement in the idyllic tropical setting of St Lucia.

- **COMPLIMENTARY WEEK** Stay 14 nights and pay for only 7. From £1,700 (HK)
- **SPECIAL VALUE FOR CHILDREN** 14 nights including children's room & flight from just £555 (HK)
- **COMPLIMENTARY SPA TREATMENTS** Stay 10 nights and receive 3 revitalising treatments.

Offers valid on holidays between 15th May – 11th December '99

CALL NOW 01244 355500

CARIBBEAN CONNECTION



## CARRIBEAN

## CARRIBEAN

Holidays to the very best resorts in the Caribbean from luxurious panoramic homes to island hideaways. Tailor-made arrangements.

0171 431 2131

ABANDON YOUR WORRIES! 80 apartments & villas £250 per property per week. Lower prices for 10 days. 10 days plus airport transfers. Travel Insurance 01546 85 24 07

## UK

## THE LEONARD

15 Regent Street London W1B 5AA

### "London Hotel of the Year"

FORANKERS

Exclusive Facilities, Sumptuous Suits, Fluffy Towels, Great Beds, Overstuffed Pillows, Huge Bathrooms and Outstanding People who want to look after you. Enjoy London from the luxury of our Fabulous Suites, Shops, Theatre, Museums, Rooms and Relax.

Prices from £88 per person, per night (including breakfast) for 2 nights stay on the weekend. Tel: 0171 933 2010 Fax: 0171 933 6706

## British Virgin Islands

Come discover our beautiful unspoilt islands. Stroll along stunning white sand beaches, stay in individually designed hotels, apartments or villa accommodation. Sailing and diving holidays arranged.

Call the specialists BVI Holidays on 01279 856111

## SOUTH AMERICA

South America

Great Hotels, High Street, Long Garden, Beautiful Views, 1910-90's. Prices from £350 per person, per night (including breakfast) for 2 nights stay on the weekend. Tel: 0171 933 2010 Fax: 0171 933 6706

## INDIA



The Taj beach resorts, Goa. An unforgettable Indian experience.

- 2 resorts of International standard
- 88 acres of tropical gardens
- 6 restaurants
- 2 fresh water pools
- Garden facing rooms
- Games and fitness centre
- Water sports
- Sightseeing tours

Giving you just the right blend of luxury with the ethereal charm of India. All meals under £35 for 2 persons per day. Taxes extra. For reservations call 01244 355500 or 01244 355501. Fax: 01244 355502. Email: info@tajhotels.com

TAJ, Goa. PORT AGUDA BEACH RESORT TAJ HOLIDAY VILLAGE

Taj Hotels, Resorts and Palaces

## VILLAS



Caribbean

VILLAS & COTTAGES in BARRABOS, MUSTIQUE, ST. LUCIA, GRENADA AND SEVERAL OTHER IDYLIC CARIBBEAN ISLANDS...

Elegant Resorts 01244 897 444

## MEXICO

ACAPULCO VILLA in Las Brisas

• 32 bedrooms • pool • beautiful view • 90 degrees & sunny \$350,000 Fax: 561 655-0101 Email: owo@concentric.net

## WORLDWIDE

HOLIDAYS & FLIGHTS

Scheduled • Charter • Packages • Tailor-made • All inclusive • WORLDWIDE DESTINATIONS

For Competitive Prices call 01244 355500 or 01244 355501. Fax: 01244 355502. Email: info@tajhotels.com

AVIAN 0800 3895659

USA

RANCH AMERICA

THE UK'S PREMIER RANCH HOLIDAY SPECIALIST. Fully equipped Ranch Holidays in Arizona, Montana, Wyoming, Colorado & Texas etc. Plus Cattle Rides & White Water Rafting. Wholesome Adventures in Nature. Wyoming & Montana. 01293 671 831

AUSTRALIA

Ultimate Australia, New Zealand & Fiji. Contact the true specialists for the most professional advice and individually tailored itineraries. Call to receive our brochures. Travel Portfolio 01294 782255. ASTA 1678







## OUTDOORS / MOTORING

## Gardening

## Prime time to plant those new desirables

Robin Lane Fox's thoughts turn to the changing world of vegetables

All eyes are on the snowdrops, still at their best and never better than last Sunday when they could be viewed through the rare combination of soft sunshine, followed by heavy, melting snowflakes. While experts delight in their expensive named varieties, my juices have been directed to the extremities of the vegetable kingdom where the mild winter has brought particular rewards.

The most particular is the earliness of that old English classic, purple sprouting. If this excellent vegetable was an old Euro-kale, keen diners would be all over it. There is nothing romantic about plain purple sprouting, except to those of us who love it truly for what it is. In most years, the ink-purple heads do not appear before mid-March, but they have a flavour which heavy old cabbages cannot rival.

Purple sprouting is extremely easy to grow if you remember to sow it outdoors in mid- to late-April. It has to be given enough space to hang around for nearly a year, but it is worth the room so long as you can keep off its predators. Pigeons love it, too, but a mild winter allows them many alternatives. In the world of vegetables, you seldom enjoy anything without the risk of a foe.

It's a world that changes with our fashionable cuisine. I suspect it is back in favour, now that international taste has widened the old English palate. Supermarkets do cater for the new desirables but we soon learn they are not always cheap and tend inevitably to be standardised and away from their home soil. Vegetable growing enjoyed a brief surge when the stock market collapsed in 1974 and old investment stars told us to horde baked beans in the roof and try to live off the land.

Perhaps it will collapse again, but the rising taste for exotic herbs and vegetables is already turning thirtysomethings with country bolt-holes to the pleasure of growing their own. Last month, somebody even wrote to ask whether they could put their newly-acquired garden down to Cavolo Nero without hurting it.

If you want to join the fun, tick off purple sprouting and its red relation, a newcomer called Red Bor, and plan to sow them in late April. Both can be bought from

the catalogues of Suttons, Hele Road, Torquay, Devon, and Thompson and Morgan, Poplar Lane, Ipswich, Suffolk. The dark, crinkly green leaves of Cavolo Nero are equally easy to raise from seed. Simpsons of 27 Meadowbrook, Old Oxted, Surrey, sell it for only £1 a packet.

While you plan ahead for these varieties listed under kale or Borecole, you can also start to vegetate by some easy action in the next two weeks or so. The easiest and most rewarding is to plant shallots. They come in bags from most garden centres or from Thompson and Morgan in good varieties.

Shallots are those small onions

## Your own early broad beans are one of summer's serious pleasures

with a mild flavour that always seems essential if you are following a Raymond Blanc cooking text. I was brought up in the belief that they should be planted on the shortest day of the year. Usually, the shortest is the wettest and most foul and it takes more than the shallot to make me want to risk it.

Mid-February is early enough and if you wonder if vegetable growing will ever be your scene, this easy corner of it is the one in which to begin. Loosen up a line of soil without treading over it again and compacting it. Rake it lightly and plant the shallots about 8in apart, pressing them into the soil so only the upper third of the stem is visible.

Try to handle those you buy in a shop to be sure they are firm and have not started to sprout. Varieties have multiplied in the past 10 years and two of the best are now the yellow-brown Atlantic and the red Pikant. Both are excellent in stews or in a sauce accompanying chicken.

In mid-June, remember the old trick of pulling a little soil away from each expanding shallot. This allows them to multiply into ever-more little shallots, the one enemy being mildew which caused trouble to the nursery

stocks last year. Shallots are not over-abundant in the trade, so start early in the next 10 days.

It would be worth trying garlic at the same time. Garlic never featured in the main garden handbooks of the 1970s: it was horribly French. Now, gardeners find it can be obstinate because the individual cloves will refuse to split and multiply. I have only planted it outdoors in February and find the results good enough to justify the effort.

Thompson and Morgan offer garlic bulbs by post at £2.99 for four, enough for a 10ft row. The bulbs should be split into single cloves and planted just below the surface of a light soil, one by one. Experts usually advise an earlier planting in late autumn so the cloves can begin to root and

enjoy at least a month of sub-10°C temperature in the soil.

Ten varieties are offered by Simpsons of Old Oxted, but only for autumn delivery because they believe in it. They divide the list into short- and long-stalkers and are an excellent source for those of you sick of buying small heads in a crisis from a general store. My cloves will go into the ground in the next two weeks and take their usual chance.

If you have a slightly heated greenhouse, you can steal some useful time by sowing broad beans during the next few weeks and bringing them on for hardening off in stages in late March and for planting outdoors in mid- to late-April. The seeds can be sown in trays or 8in apart in pots.

Slight heat brings them on early and gives you an earlier and better bean than anything advised by the handbooks for outdoor sowing in late spring. Whenever I remember this seasonal trick, I am very grateful for it. Broad beans are so silky and pretty in a garden in early summer and are well worth the effort of bringing them forward. The right variety for early sowing is the popular Aquadulce Claudia. Your own early broad beans are one of summer's serious pleasures.

If you want some more outdoor action, take a risk on parsnips. If the soil dries out, there is scope for an outdoor sowing of these excellent vegetables before the end of February. Of course they have their problems, like any

thing else in the green end of the catalogue.

They are prone to canker, but I have gone back to an old method of sowing I saw as a boy. Take an iron bar or crowbar and ram it into the soil for several inches. Fill the resulting hole with a good rich potting compost and sow two parsnip seeds into it. If they both germinate, remove one in due course. The better compost gives a straighter and healthier parsnip.

I am hugely fond of this old vegetable which has risen recently up the ladder of fashionable foods. But it, or roast it, but remember to crowbar it first in unpromising February. These old, forceful tricks behind the scenes lend special flavour to the eventual parsnip on your plate.

Lucy's Plot  
Let's get real

There were people looking at my garden last weekend. Clever people, knowledgeable people, the kind who have been gardening for 30 years and know how many runner beans make five: my mother and her best friend.

An act of God helped me out - the whole plot was under snow. Absolutely the only thing showing was flat-leaved parsley hiding under my Christmas present clothes (looking not too bad, though I say it myself). What a relief.

You see, I have to admit that three-quarters of the contents of my plot exist in neatly edged beds only in my mind. The real thing is not the same at all. When people ask me: "How's the garden growing?" I tend to get the mental and actual gardens confused. Living in the Highlands, up a hill and in the depths of a wood, I always hope that by the time anyone actually sees the garden it will have caught up with my mental picture.

My guests were kind; they congratulated me on my Marks and Sparks-style miniature cabbages - such - and my baby leeks, not baby at all of course, more tottering with old age. They swallowed a lot of tall stories about what lay beneath the snow.

To tell the truth, I am desperately keen to be doing something constructive. Even though my compost looks convincing, my muck is well rotted and the potting shed is stuffed to the gunwales with seeds of every kind, the ground is still so rock hard or wringing wet that, lost in ignorance, I can think of nothing to do. I suppose I should be lunched over some squared paper "designing" my garden.

Books and magazines urge me to soften dramatic shapes with fluid ones and to perform balancing acts involving contrasting, blending and highlighting. I don't really want to "echo" and "animate". I just want to grow something I can eat.

The days are lengthening perceptibly now with occasional lurches into imitation spring weather. There's fun to be had anticipating the real thing by setting up bird boxes.

Prospective lodgers need a chance to have a look around before moving in. I've been climbing ladders and tying turfs of heather in a trill around Scots pine hollies to tempt a bird or squirrel to move in within sight of the kitchen window.

Lucy Ogilvie-Grant



ITALY

NEW ZEALAND

5663

NEW ZEALAND

NEW ZEALAND

NEW ZEALAND

NEW ZEALAND

NEW ZEALAND

NEW ZEALAND

NEW ZEALAND

NEW ZEALAND

NEW ZEALAND

NEW ZEALAND

NEW ZEALAND

NEW ZEALAND

NEW ZEALAND

NEW ZEALAND

NEW ZEALAND

NEW ZEALAND

NEW ZEALAND

NEW ZEALAND

NEW ZEALAND

NEW ZEALAND

NEW ZEALAND

NEW ZEALAND

NEW ZEALAND

NEW ZEALAND

NEW ZEALAND

NEW ZEALAND

NEW ZEALAND

NEW ZEALAND

NEW ZEALAND

NEW ZEALAND

NEW ZEALAND

NEW ZEALAND

NEW ZEALAND

NEW ZEALAND

NEW ZEALAND

NEW ZEALAND



Rock-solid Rover: cars of its size and price do not come more tranquil than this sophisticated offering

## Road test

## Rover's make-or-break marque

The 75 scores highly with Stuart Marshall. But is it enough to restore the maker's reputation?

So, the first thing I noticed about the new 75 was that it felt rock solid; the body shell is said to be 250 per cent stiffer than the Accralm-based 600's. Its cushioned ride and freedom from tyre and suspension noise make motorway travel exceptionally quiet.

But it is when leaving smooth tarmac at quite high speed and hitting the broken surfaces of old-style Spanish roads without slowing down that Rover's careful suspension development is really seen to have paid off.

There are no squeaks or rattles; the only clue to the roughness of the road is a modest amount of tyre roar. Even on cob-

blestones, the 75 is unfussed. Rover is the first to admit that suspension and acoustics technology from its parent BMW played a large part in creating so urbane a car. "Our Honda-based models were a compromise, a necessary evil. Since BMW took control we have had access to facilities we would only have dreamed about before," was how Peter Morgan, project director, put it.

The 75's petrol engines - a 1.8-litre four-cylinder and V8s of 2.0-litres and 2.5-litres capacity - are Rover's own but the 2.0-litre turbo-diesel is BMW's, modified by

Rover to sit sideways under the bonnet of a front-wheel-driven car. The standard 5-speed gearbox is German, the optional 5-speed automatic comes from Japan.

The first 75 I tried was the turbo-diesel. High gearing - just over 30mph (48kph) at 1,000 rpm in top - made it feel totally untrussed on the motorway. With more torque available than the 2.5-litre petrol V6 provides at twice the engine speed, the turbo-diesel climbed hills lustily and picked up so well from low revs that, out of town, it was almost a one-gear car.

The "common rail" system of high pressure direct injection under electronic control, combined with sophisticated mountings, made the turbo-diesel as refined as a very good four-cylinder petrol engine.

Changing to a 2.5-litre automatic, I found it predictably quicker off the mark (0-62 mph in 9.5 seconds compared with the manual turbo-diesel's 11.7 seconds). The transmission was so self-evident that you knew it had shifted only by the change in engine note.

As is so often the case, the smallest-engined version of the new Rover was at least as pleasing as its larger-engined, thirstier and costlier brethren. The 1.8-litre manual 75 has virtually the same top speed (120 mph) and standing start acceleration as the turbo-diesel, but gets its flexibility for town driving from much lower gearing.

When no one was looking I saw 5,500 rpm (equal to 112 mph) in the 1.8-litre on a deserted motorway, a speed at which the turbo-diesel would be turning over at just under 4,000 rpm. The 1.8 petrol engine, though clearly hard

worked, never felt over-extended, but the turbo-diesel was more relaxed.

I suspect the long-striding turbo-diesel will be popular in Germany, one of Rover's prime markets for the 75. There, 100mph cruising speeds are routine and legal. As always, the turbo-diesel wins hands down for economy. It should average about 47mpg (6l/100km) against the 2.5-litre V6's 30mpg and 36mpg for the 1.8-litre, all with manual transmission.

The 75's interior is traditional Rover, full of wood veneer and typical British understatement. I was in a small minority who did

not like the retro-styled instrumentation, which is meant to revive memories of country bank managers' Rovers of the 1960s. Though comfortable, the front seats lack under-thigh support for tall people and rear-seat space is adequate rather than generous.

The height of the top anchorages of the front-seat belts changes automatically as the seat is adjusted. Shorter people who like to sit well back may find the belt rubbing on their necks.

Although the 75 replaces both the 600 and 600 in Rover's model line-up, it compares closely with cars like the Audi A4 and Mercedes-Benz C-class, not the Audi A6 or Mercedes-Benz E-class. Another obvious rival, though no one from Rover said so at the launch, is the BMW 3-Series.

People who value ride quality and refinement more highly than the ability to outcorner all-comers and win the traffic lights grand prix will rate the Rover 75 very highly. I do not see it as a car for the young and thrusting driver, but in their great days Rovers never were. Already the motoring magazines are saying it is too soft. For me, cars in this size and price class simply do not come more tranquil.

When the 75 goes on sale in mid-June, two comfort/equipment levels will be offered, Club and Connoisseur. Prices will start at £19,525 on-the-road for a 1.8-litre Club and go up to £25,625 for a 2.5-litre Connoisseur. Cheaper Classic versions - air conditioning is the main omission - will be available at the end of the year from £18,275.

In marketing speak, the 75 is intended to achieve "resonance of brand heritage". (In plain language, to restore Rover's reputation as a maker of fine cars for discriminating people). It may take a year, with tens of thousands of 75s on the road, for Rover to know if it has pulled it off. However large the advertisement spend, personal recommendation from satisfied owners, plus perceived status, are what really counts in the end.



SPORT

Michael Thompson-Noel

# F1: it's the pits and losing its grip

Formula One motor racing is an extraordinary business. The new season starts on March 7, in Melbourne, and, because of rule changes, many of the drivers believe it will be even harder than last year for rivals to overtake. At this rate, it seems reasonable to wonder whether Formula One has any future at all.

The problem is the pace of technological advancement. Unchecked, F1 cars would be dangerously - *impossibly* - fast, so the sport keeps tinkering with the rules and trying to slow them down.

Last season, narrower cars and thinner tyres with three grooves reduced the cars' grip when cornering. This season a fourth groove will reduce grip even more.

Damon Hill, the 1996 world champion, says the new regulations may make overtaking impossible. "Everybody wants to make grand prix racing as safe as possible, but also as exciting. We have gone down a cul-de-sac."

Michael Schumacher, who has twice been world champion,

says: "The new tyres do nothing to help overtaking or the best drivers to show their talent. The level of effort you have to put into a Formula One car increases with the speed you go."

Eddie Irvine says: "It is totally the wrong way to go... We will just end up going slower and overtaking much less so it will not be so interesting for us or for people watching."

Astonishingly, Max Mosley, who is president of the sport's governing body, claims grand prix racing has become more interesting for spectators precisely because overtaking is more difficult.

"One of the results is that pit stops are [now] of crucial importance, adding a new and exciting dimension," he says. "The build-up to that can go on for 30 minutes, so the tension and drama is terrific."

Quite possibly, those remarks

of Mosley's may prove to be the death rattle of a formerly great sport.

□□□

An enterprise almost as queer as motor racing is cricket which, in the main, is played and watched by dummies.

Occasionally, however, cricket throws up a saintly hero, of whom the latest is Indian leg-spinner Anil Kumble, who took all 10 wickets (for 74 runs) against Pakistan in a Test innings in New Delhi last Sunday.

Kumble is only the second bowler to have performed this feat, joining England off-spinner Jim Laker, who took 10 for 53 against Australia in Manchester in 1956.

The handsome and mustachioed Kumble, 28, lives with his mother and has become,

in a trice, India's most eligible bachelor. "All I had to do was pitch the ball in the right areas, mix up my pace and spin and trap the batsman," the ultra-modest Kumble told the Hindustan Times. This glorious person also provided a wicket-by-wicket, batsman-by-batsman account of his epochal performance, which is worth dipping into:

1) Shahid Afridi: It was important for us to get the breakthrough... The Pakistani openers had already put on more than 100 runs. I pushed one through (Afridi) and Afridi got a big nick. 2) Ijaz Ahmed: I wanted to pitch the ball right up to him and hit him on his toes. I delivered it quicker, too. 3) Inzamam-ul-Haq: It was not a wicket-taking ball at all but he got on inside edge to it and dragged it on to the stumps. It was a big wicket because he could

have been a sticky customer. 4) Yousaf Youhana: I was aiming to get him to play half-volleys. The ball was low and in line with the stumps and it seemed like he was not looking to play it... 5) Moiz Khan: I bowled a slow leg-break and the pitch did the rest, getting the ball to bounce a bit. 6) Saad Azwar: I had been bowling around the stumps to him (but)... switched to bowling over the stumps since I could get more body into it. I bowled a leg-break and he gloved it to forward short leg. 7) Salim Malik: I bowled a short, fastish delivery, a flipper that bounced more than even I thought it would, and he tried to pull me. Pulling or cutting was never going to be easy on this wicket... and he was beaten by the one that skidded. 8) Mushtaq Ahmed: I bowled a slow leg-break to him (and) he edged a simple catch to... guzz. 9) Saqlain

Mushtaq: I was not aiming to do anything but bowl straight and at yorker length. It hit him on the pad. It was the end of the over and I was blank. I did not think of anything else but picked up my cap and sweater and walked to my place at fine leg. But knowing [Anil] Kumble, I knew he would not strike too hard to claim the 10th (wicket) and would leave it to me.

10) Wasim Akram: I bowled a leg-break to him, expecting him to leave it and get a top-edge to square leg or he bowled. It just happened that he turned it to Laxman at forward short leg.

□□□

Along with Kumble, Russian ice-dancing queen Maya Usova is another person worthy of reverence, for she is the victor in the saga of Russian skating's crossed-love couples.

Usova, 34, once famously feuded with Pasha Grishchuk, who is eight years her junior, at a Los Angeles restaurant after discovering the younger woman was having an office affair with Alexander Zhulin. Usova's then husband and skating partner since 1990.

So at the end of last season, Usova kicked Zhulin out and teamed up with Yevgeny Platov, 31, who was formerly Grishchuk's partner. And - yes - Zhulin paired off with Grishchuk, though their future as a couple is at present unclear.

However, Usova and her new partner Platov are having plenty of fun. They triumphed at the world professional championships in Washington last December, and are now considering a return to the amateur ranks so as to be able to compete in the 2002 winter Olympics.

In Moscow this week, Usova said she was making up for years of unhappiness with Zhulin. "I've changed coaches. I've changed my hair. I've changed everything. I'm starting a new life."

## Yachting

# Great Survivor ready to take on the world

Two years after his celebrated escape, Tony Bullimore is sailing forth, Keith Wheatley reports

Tony Bullimore's invitation to see his new boat contained clear directions. "Head for the middle of Bristol and the river. You can't miss her." The Great Survivor was right, the new machine dominates the medieval wharves where John Cabot once prepared for his voyage to discover and trade with the New World.

Exactly two years after Bullimore, 60, swam from beneath his capsize yacht *Exida Challenger* to greet the Australian Navy, he is back in the game. Undaunted by age or financial worries, indeed by anything, the grey-haired skipper with the look of a prizefighter and the heart of a lion is preparing for sea.

The boat is a powerful beast. She was built in Canada by an aerospace company almost 20 years ago for a French team which wanted to go multi-hull racing. "It was the early days of Kevlar and composite structures, so by modern standards it's overbuilt. But, by God, it's strong," chuckled Bullimore.

His long-time associate Nigel Irens, the boat's original designer, has planned a giant new wing mast and boom for the catamaran. They are being built at Carbospar near Southampton, the specialist marine fabricators which did the original raft on the boat before Sir Peter Blake and Sir Robin Knox-Johnston took her round the world in 74 days in 1966 to become the first holders of the Jules Verne trophy.

"Talking to Nigel about the modifications they did at that time, it emerged that the only reason he didn't extend the hulls to the optimum 100ft was that the shed at Carbospar was too small," explained the new skipper. "So I told him to go ahead and do it."

Nigel Irens is one of the reasons that Mrs Bullimore, the Jamaican-born Lale, is reasonably sanguine about letting her husband go back to the Southern Ocean that so nearly killed him. "She's got great faith in Nigel who's always produced fabulous boats for me in years gone by," said Bullimore. "She also knows that I'm a survivor who knows what he's doing." Irens is now arguably the world's most renowned designer of racing multi-hulls.

Twenty years ago as a young man in Bristol he still had a reputation to make. Bullimore was a middle-aged businessman and sailor with a yen to go racing. As a partnership they raced together on the boats Irens drew and Bullimore paid for.

"Nigel and I had great times, won all kinds of stuff, were joint Yachtsman of the Year in 1966, and it's a very important partnership to me," said Bullimore. What makes it so is undoubtedly the fact that Irens goes back years before the celebrity of the rescue and knows the profound seriousness and

drive beneath the image of the grizzled survivor.

"That image of me wrapped in tinfoil like a jacket potato has been a problem in a way. There can't be anyone in the world who didn't see those pictures," he sighed. "It was an incident and I was lucky. But it's in the past and now I want to go on and do new things."

He rejects vehemently the notion he is accident-prone, a kind of real-life Captain Pugwash, and the statistics bear him out. "I've raced over 250,000 miles at sea and it's a fact that if you drive enough boats for enough



Round-the-world yachtsman Tony Bullimore: "It's a fact that if you drive enough boats for enough miles, some of them will break and then sink"

miles, some of them will break and then sink." Bullimore protested. "I could name you at least three professional yachtsmen who have had more problems than me, but they don't get stuck with this image."

Bullimore plans to have the raft completed by late summer. A huge inflatable dome, with viewing panels for the public, will cover the boat and make the project even more of a landmark on the Bristol waterfront. The arrival of the 100ft mast by road trailer from Southampton should cause a stir - especially among motorists.

Much of the city's docks will close for a day so the giant can be hoisted by crane over swing bridges and locks before being sailed down-river to Avonmouth.

After trials, the first big voyage will be a mid-winter attempt at the Jules Verne circumnavigation record, now held by Frenchman Olivier de Kersauson and down to 72 days. After his own record-breaking run, Knox-Johnston said that with a little more luck from the weather he felt the boat was capable of a sub-70-day run.

"One of the reasons for extending the bows and putting more buoyancy and lift

in there is that it means you can drive the boat harder through heavy seas without it digging in and then cart-wheeling," said Bullimore.

Suddenly one's mental landscape changes from the urban bustle of a chic dock-side cafe in Bristol to the sub-zero wastes of an ocean where the only colour is grey, help thousands of miles away and an upside-down boat likely to prove a tomb - for most people. Bullimore escaped after four days trapped in freezing darkness, half-immersed in icy water.

Now he wants to go back, in a boat that takes no pris-

oners. Few of us even possess the imagination, let alone the sheer *calmness*, to visualise driving a craft like this, night and day, at up to 30 knots and never below 20 through those Antarctic wastes in pursuit of a dream.

Bullimore, although a gregarious man, does not really enjoy the constant familiarity of global celebrity that his extraordinary rescue brought. However, as a good West Country boy he does quite like stepping off the train at Paddington and having the cab drivers tout and shout "He's back!" from the taxi windows. Let's hope they keep saying it.

too deeply what makes a horse run faster. Anyway, the bloodstock business benefits from retaining some mystique, so much so that the characteristic racehorses are most likely to inherit from their parents is the price paid for them at auction.

Budiatsky concludes: "It is a tribute to its fecundity and its adaptability that the horse has survived both near extinction at the whims of nature and often harsh exploitation at the hand of man."

"For 6,000 years the horse was a creature of man's enthusiasm for warfare, his ever growing demand for motive and tractive power and his anthropomorphic and romantic imagination: for all these, the horse has suffered misunderstanding, drudgery, and worse." Something to bear in mind next time you back a loser at the racetrack.

## Racing

# Saddled with an unfair burden

Colin Cameron defends racehorses against the overblown hopes of their human followers



Thoroughbred racehorses use much of their brainpower in just staying upright

Julian Hubbard/Report

Racehorses are not machines. Many a trainer has reminded an owner of this truth while unsaddling a short-priced favourite after a disappointing losing effort, with the noisy celebrations in the winner's enclosure ringing in their ears.

The problem is that gamblers and those crazy enough to invest in bloodstock have high expectations of the objects of their speculation.

Only 12 species of animal are widely domesticated. Of these, only two are asked to determine the outcome of extensive wagering. Dogs (mainly greyhounds) do so in relative anonymity compared to horse-racing. Each day, around the world, racehorses shoulder the burden of responsibility for millions of pounds in bettors' stakes.

It should not be a problem. Horses have, relatively speaking, big brains, and adequate mental faculties for the discipline of racing.

They may not be the best at learning - a racehorse rates alongside aquarium fish, guinea pigs and octopuses at mastering new tasks - but, once taught, a good memory ensures that little is forgotten. Most racehorses also possess generous natures. They are manageable and bond easily.

However, if you are a British racegoer, for example, such reassuring traits should not encourage you to double your stakes today at Ayr, Catterick, Haydock, Lingfield or Newbury racecourses. In fact, there are good reasons why you should consider halving them.

The equine brain may be large, but the top-heavy conformation of the thoroughbred racehorse means that most of its brainpower is

used in staying upright, before a jockey even starts to ask his horse to race flat out or negotiate a hurdle or steeplechasing fence.

Nor are you particularly likely to gain in confidence by judging a racehorse's intelligence by his choice of companion. Pebbles, a brilliant racehorse in the 1980s, persisted in a liaison with Come on the Blues, a durable but uninspiring stablemate in trainer Clive Brittain's Newmarket yard. Poor Pebbles never understood that the apple of her eye was a gelding.

Similarly, neither Prix de l'Arc de Triomphe winner Allez France nor Remittance Man, successful at Cheltenham in the Queen Mother

Champion Chase, enhanced the breed's reputation for intelligence. Both had to be accompanied to the races by sheep.

Even impressive equine memory can assist the bookmakers. Triptych, like Pebbles a classic winner, always remembered to brace herself for take-off and landing when she was flown to the races. But Moonax, talented enough to win the St Leger, used his recollection of where the race-course stables were to seek a return to the comfort of his box at the first opportunity, before the winning post had been reached.

The case of Clever Hans, who entertained Berliners at the start of the 20th century,

should be an education. Under the tutelage of Wilhelm von Osten, a German schoolteacher, Clever Hans would answer geography and maths questions from a crowd with a nod of his head, or a scratch of the hoof.

The Prussian Academy of Sciences carried out an investigation and, having tested the horse in isolation, concluded that Hans had somehow learnt, with mimes awarded for correct answers, to respond to the mildest of cues from the crowd. Hans was clever, but not extraordinarily so.

Stephen Budiatsky, an excellent book called *The Nature of Horses* (Phoenix, £7.99), offers the example of

Hans and plenty of insight for punters to absorb along with their losses. But his book is far from critical of horses. Quite naturally, he credits the horse with the greatest victory of all survival.

Budiatsky claims that horses were prime candidates for extinction. He notes that, physiologically, the odds have been stacked against them for 6,000 years, and salutes them for adapting over time to a changing environment, not to mention successfully reproducing unassisted - far from a straightforward process, as anyone who has worked on a stud farm will attest.

Horses, explains Budiatsky, can thank their early switch to a vegetarian diet for their continued existence today. It is the distance between eye and mouth which enabled wild horses to keep a look-out for predators during mealtimes, and thus avoid attack.

In short, horses have mastered the game of evolution. Do not think of criticising racehorses, either, for not getting any faster. They are. Average race-times are falling, even if individual race records are only very seldom broken.

If you hope to see much-improved times for top races, you are likely to be disappointed - for two reasons. One, horses are already racing flat out; two, there is no outstanding incentive to chase new records.

Modern methods of improving fitness have little effect on racehorses. The modern sport of horse-racing is three centuries old, and the thoroughbred racehorse's engine was extremely efficient at the outset. Horses produce maximum energy levels almost instantly, but, as a result, they overheat very quickly (that is why they sweat so much) which limits performance.

Their cooling system is not great, either. The absence of a collar bone in the equine skeleton means that only one refreshing breath per stride is possible.

And, as a consequence of low oxygen intake, tiredness creeps in early. Indeed, some people believe all that early-morning effort on the training gallops only helps racehorses ignore the fact that they are getting tired.

Racehorse breeders are also partly to blame if racehorses are not dramatically swifter than hitherto. Most breeders are consumed with the task of producing what will prove the most valuable racehorses in the yearling market, rather than the fastest ones.

These two pursuits can be different. Few in the bloodstock world seek to explore

sympathies lie with Hill. Spokesman Graham Sharpe says: "We felt the rule change was fairer to all concerned."

"Quite a lot of tennis players seem to be starting matches injured, and then pulling out. We made the match bets void so as to be fair to those who, unknowingly, back an injured player. Also, we were protecting ourselves against potential exploitation."

Helen Shirley is clearly a fearless punter. She will find plenty of other opportunities to bash the beastly bookies.

M.T.N

How to punt it

Courier at the Australian Open at odds of 4-9. Courier retired from the match in the 4th set, presumably injured, says Shirley.

She was later shocked to discover the Kafelnikov bet was void. Six days before she made her bet, Hills had altered its rule, declaring that, henceforth, when a tennis match was uncompleted, such a bet was void.

Shirley reckoned the rule change was "illogical nonsense" and said she felt aggrieved that Hills had not publicised the alteration properly. It had cost her nearly half her anticipated winnings of £169, she said.

Be that as it may, my



## INTERNATIONAL ARTS GUIDE

## What's on around the world

## AMSTERDAM

**DANCE**  
Het Muziektheater  
Tel: 31-20-551 8911  
Dutch National Ballet: new, full-length version of The Magic Flute, staged by Wayne Eagling and Toer van Schayk; Feb 17, 19, 20

**EXHIBITIONS**  
Rijksmuseum  
Tel: 31-20-673 2121  
● Adriaen de Vries (1566-1626): Imperial Sculptor. Major exhibition celebrating the work of the Dutch sculptor, who worked for Emperor Rudolf II among other European courts; to Mar 14  
● Asser: Pioneer of Dutch photography. Nearly 200 photographs, including portraits and still lifes, made by Eduard Isaac Asser (1808-1884). The prints were produced by a variety of techniques with which Asser experimented before devoting his full attention to developing a method of photographic reproduction; to Mar 14

**OPERA**  
Netherlands Opera, Het Muziektheater  
Tel: 31-20-551 8911  
Carmen: by Bizet. New staging by Andreas Homoki, conducted by Edo de Waart. The designs are by Wolfgang Gussmann and Gabriele Jaencke, and the cast includes Carmen Oprisanu and Martin Thompson; Feb 15, 18

## BARCELONA

**EXHIBITION**  
Museu Picasso  
Tel: 34-3-319 6310  
Picasso - Engravings 1900-1942: more than 250 works on loan from the Musée Picasso in Paris, presented as a diary which follows the different themes and techniques that informed Picasso's work; to Apr 4

## BERLIN

**OPERA**  
Deutsche Oper  
Tel: 49-30-34384-01  
● Faust: by Gounod. Conducted by Sebastian Lang-Lessing in a staging by John Dew; Feb 19  
● Manon: by Massenet. Conducted by Sebastian Lang-Lessing in a staging by Cesare Lievi; Feb 13

## BONN

**EXHIBITIONS**  
Kunst- und Ausstellungshalle der Bundesrepublik Deutschland  
Tel: 49-228-917 1200  
www.kah-bonn.de  
High Renaissance in the Vatican: Art and Culture at the Papal Court (1503-34). The early 16th century saw Rome establish itself as the centre of art in Europe: the Vatican commissioned work from such great artists as Leonardo da Vinci, Michelangelo and Raphael. This exhibition displays some of the masterpieces that resulted, and details the context in which they were produced; to Apr 11

## BRUSSELS

**OPERA**  
La Monnaie  
Tel: 32-2-229 1211  
Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk conducted by Antonio Pappano in a new staging by Stein Winge, with sets by Benoit Dugardyn and costumes by Jorge Jara; Feb 16, 19

## CARDIFF

**Welsh National Opera**  
Tel: 44-1222-464 666  
Peter Grimes: by Benjamin Britten. New staging by Peter Stein, conducted by Carlo Rizzi. Cast includes John Daszak and Janice Watson; Feb 15, 20, 24

## DALLAS

**OPERA**  
Dallas Opera  
Tel: 1-214-443 1000  
www.dallasopera.org  
La Bohème: by Puccini. Conducted by Antonello Allemandi in a staging by Mark Lamos, with sets by Michael Yeagan; Feb 13

## EDINBURGH

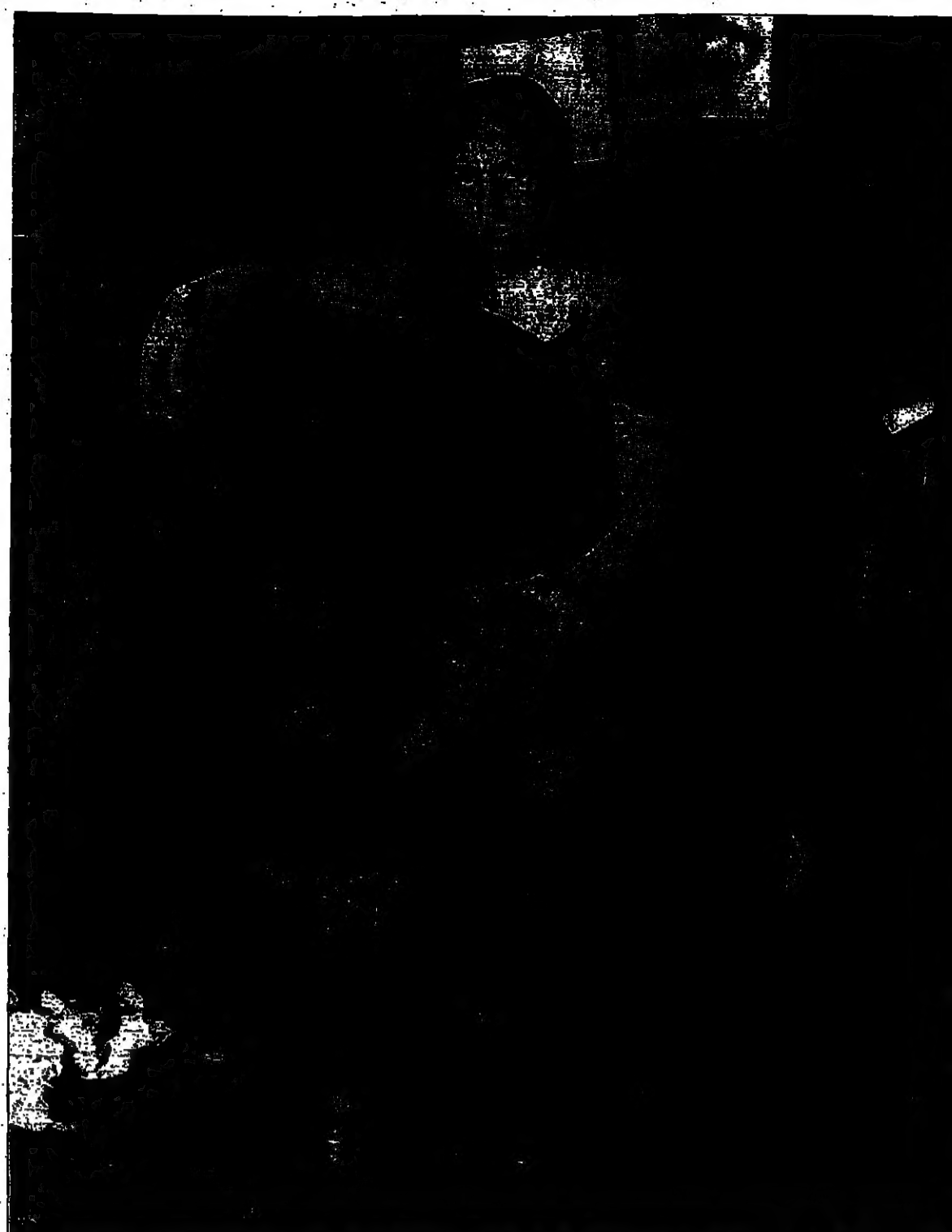
**EXHIBITION**  
Scottish National Portrait Gallery  
Tel: 44-131-624 6200  
John Ruskin: exhibition exploring the influence of the Victorian critic and theorist. Includes drawings, watercolours and photographs; to Mar 7

## FORT WORTH

**EXHIBITION**  
Kimbell Art Museum  
Tel: 1-817-3328451  
www.kimbellart.org  
Matisse and Picasso: A Gentle Rivalry. More than 100 paintings, sculptures and drawings on loan from collections around the world make up this first-ever exhibition devoted to the relationship between the two great modernists; to May 2

## GLASGOW

**OPERA**  
Scottish Opera, Theatre Royal  
Tel: 44-141-332 9000  
● Der Rosenkavalier: by R. Strauss. New staging by David McVicar, conducted by Richard Armstrong. The cast includes Joan Rodgers; Feb 13, 18  
● The Magic Fountain: by Delius. Conducted by Richard Armstrong in a new staging by Aiden Lang, with designs by Ashley Marth-Davis;



'Olya Khokhlova in the Montreux Studio', by Picasso, in an exhibition at the Barbican Art Gallery, London

Feb 20

## HOUSTON

**EXHIBITION**  
Museum of Fine Arts, Houston  
Tel: 1-713-639 3321  
www.mfa-houston.org  
Brassai: The Eye of Paris. Retrospective of the photographer's work that coincides with the 100th anniversary of his birth. Dubbed 'the eye of Paris' by Henry Miller, Brassai celebrated the city in photographic series like 'Dance', 'Society' and 'Griffith'. This show includes the 'Paris at Night' photographs taken during nocturnal wanderings with the flâneur and poet Léon Paul Fargue; to Feb 28

**THEATRE**  
Houston Grand Opera, Wortham Center  
Tel: 1-713-227 2787  
www.hgo.com  
A Little Night Music: by Sondheim. Grant Gershon conducts a production by Michael Leeds, with a cast including Frederica von Stade, Thomas Allen and Sheri Greenawald; Feb 14

## LAUSANNE

**EXHIBITION**  
Musée Cantonal des Beaux-Arts  
Tel: 41-21-912 8332  
Courbet - artist and promoter: more than 70 paintings by Gustave Courbet (1819-77), including landscapes, portraits and nudes. The exhibition concentrates upon Courbet's artistic output after 1855, especially during his exile in Switzerland; to Feb 21

## LEEDS

**THEATRE**  
West Yorkshire Playhouse  
Tel: 44-113-213 7700  
The Tempest: by Shakespeare. Jude Kelly directs a cast including Ian McKellen as Prospero, with designs by Robert Innes Hopkins

## LILLE

**EXHIBITION**  
Palais des Beaux-Arts  
Goya: un regard libre. Small-scale exhibition which explores the range and peculiarities of the painter's work. The 50 works on display include loans from around the world; to Mar 14

## LONDON

**CONCERT**  
Barbican Hall  
Tel: 44-171-638 8891  
London Symphony Orchestra: conducted by Myung-whun Chung in works by Rachmaninov, with piano soloist Jean-Yves Thibaudet; Feb 18

## EXHIBITIONS

**Barbican Art Gallery**  
Tel: 44-171-638 8891  
● Africa by Africa: A Photographic View. Spanning the breadth of photography produced in Africa since the 1920s. Includes works by Mama Cassel, Seydou Keita and Samuel Fosso; to Mar 28  
● Picasso and Photography: The Dark Mirror. Exhibition exploring the influence of photography on Picasso's work; to Mar 28

**British Museum**  
Tel: 44-171-636 1555  
The Golden Sword: Stamford Rafters and the East. Display bringing together biographical material with objects collected by the self-taught scholar who is chiefly remembered as the founder of Singapore; includes musical

instruments, masks and shadow puppets collected by Raffles when he was Lieutenant Governor of Java (1811-18); to Apr 18

**National Gallery**  
Tel: 44-171-632 3321  
Portraits by Ingres: Images of an Epoch. 40 paintings and 50 drawings by the 19th century French painter. Includes major loans from museums in France, the US and elsewhere; to Apr 25, then touring to the US

**Royal Academy of Arts**  
Tel: 44-171-632 8000  
Monet in the 20th Century: arriving in London from Boston, this exhibition brings together late works by the founder of Impressionism. The 80 paintings on display include important public and private loans, culminating in a group of seven of the monumental water lily panels which were the triumph of his career. Also included are paintings of London and Venice; to Apr 18

**OPERA**  
English National Opera, London Coliseum  
Tel: 44-171-632 8300  
La Traviata: by Verdi. Michael Lloyd conducts a revival of Jonathan Miller's production, with a cast including Claire Rutter and Alan Ogie; Feb 16, 19

**THEATRE**  
Albery Theatre  
Tel: 44-171-366 1740  
Vassa: by Maxim Gorky. Howard Davies directs Peter Gill's new version of the Russian comedy, with Sheila Hancock in the title role

**Barbican Theatre**  
Tel: 44-171-638 8891  
● The Merchant of Venice: by Shakespeare. Royal Shakespeare Company production directed by Gregory Doran with designs by Robert Jones. The cast stars Philip Voss; in repertory to Mar 9  
● Measure for Measure: by Shakespeare. Michael Boyd directs a Royal Shakespeare Company production with a cast including Claire Holman; in repertory to Mar 11  
● The Tempest: by Shakespeare. Adrian Noble directs a Royal Shakespeare Company production, with a cast including David Calder; in repertory to Mar 4

**Comedy Theatre**  
Tel: 44-171-369 1731  
Little Malcolm and His Struggle Against the Eunuchs: by David Halliwell. First seen at Hampstead Theatre, Denis Lawson's production stars Ewan McGregor

**National Theatre, Cottesloe**  
Tel: 44-171-452 3000  
The Riot: by Nick Darke. New work by the Cornish playwright about the Newlyn Riots of 1896. Co-production between Kneehigh Theatre and the National Theatre, directed by Mike Shepherd with a cast including Geoffrey Hutchings

**National Theatre, Lyttelton**  
Tel: 44-171-452 3000  
The Forest: by Alexander Ostrovsky. Adapted by Alan Ayckbourn and directed by Anthony Page, with a cast including Michael Feast, Frances de la Tour and Michael Williams

**Piccadilly Theatre**  
Tel: 44-171-369 1734  
Fiumana: by Eduardo de Filippo, translated by Timberlake Wertenbaker. Peter Hall directs Judi Dench and Michael Pennington; in repertory to

Feb 27

## LOS ANGELES

**CONCERT**  
Dorothy Chandler Pavilion  
Tel: 1-213-972 8001  
Los Angeles Philharmonic Orchestra: conducted by Esa-Pekka Salonen in the world premiere of John Adams' Naïve and Sentimental Music, and works by Haydn and Schumann; Feb 19, 20, 21

**EXHIBITION**  
Los Angeles County Museum of Art  
Tel: 1-213-857 6000  
Van Gogh's Van Goghs: Masterpieces from the Van Gogh Museum, Amsterdam. Display of 70 paintings on loan during the period of the Dutch Museum's renovation, transferring to LA from Washington. Ranging across the artist's career, the show includes masterpieces such as Potato Eaters (1885) and Wheatfield with Crows (1890); to May 18

## MADRID

**EXHIBITIONS**  
Fundación Juan March  
Tel: 34-91-435 4240  
Marc Chagall: Jewish Traditions. 40 paintings by the Russian-French painter, produced between 1909 and 1976; to Apr 11

**Thyssen-Bornemisza Museum**  
Tel: 34-91-4203 944  
El Greco: Identity and Transformation. Focusing on the years 1560-1600, this exhibition follows the artist's early apprenticeship in Crete and Italy, in an attempt to shed light on his subsequent 'Spanish transformation'. The 80 works on display include major public and private loans; to May 16, then travelling to Rome and Athens

## MANCHESTER

**CONCERT**  
Bridgewater Hall  
Tel: 44-161-907 9000  
Mikhail Pletnev: recital by the pianist of works by Chopin, Grieg and Schumann; Feb 17

## MILAN

**EXHIBITION**  
Palazzo Reale  
Tel: 39-02-8691 5738  
L'Anima e il Volto: (The Soul and the Face): major exhibition of portraiture, comprising 370 works ranging over 400 years. Artists represented include Titian, Caravaggio, Van Dyck, Picasso and Francis Bacon; to Mar 14

**OPERA**  
La Scala  
Tel: 39-02-86791  
La Forza del Destino: by Verdi. Conducted by Riccardo Muti in a staging by Hugo de Ana, with a cast headed by Inés Salazar and José Cura; Feb 16

## MUNICH

**CONCERTS**  
Philharmonie Gasteig  
Tel: 49-89-5481 8181  
● Munich Radio Orchestra: conducted by Leopold Hager in works by J. Strauss; Feb 14  
● Prague Symphony: conducted by Tomáš Koutník in works by Dvořák and Mendelssohn-Bartholdy, with violin soloist Pavel Šporc; Feb 19

**EXHIBITION**  
Haus der Kunst  
Tel: 49-89-212720

Angelika Kauffman (1741-1807): retrospective of works by the Swiss decorative artist, who was a founder member of London's Royal Academy. Includes paintings, drawings, prints and porcelain; to Apr 18

## NEW YORK

**DANCE**  
New York City Ballet, New York State Theater  
Tel: 1-212-870 5570  
Celebrating Five Decades of Repertory: continuing 50th anniversary celebrations; Feb 13, 14, 16, 17, 18, 19

**EXHIBITIONS**  
Guggenheim Museum  
Tel: 1-212-423 3500  
www.guggenheim.org  
● Jim Dine: Walking Memory, 1959-1989. More than 100 works make up this survey of the American artist, including photographs, paintings and performance pieces; to May 16  
● Picasso and the War Years 1937-1945: more than 75 works - paintings, sculpture and works on paper - which together explore Picasso's response to the period which began with the Spanish Civil War and ended with the liberation of France. Includes major public and private loans; to May 9

**Metropolitan Museum of Art**  
Tel: 1-212-879 5500  
www.metmuseum.org  
● Cubism and Fashion: examining the ways in which Cubism has been translated into fashion. The 40 examples on display include work by Gabrielle Chanel; to Mar 14  
● Dosso Dossi, Court Painter in Renaissance Ferrara: Dosso Dossi, the last of the Ferrarese painters, was much influenced by Giorgione and Titian. This exhibition includes rarely lent masterpieces from the Borghese Gallery in Rome and other European collections; to Mar 28

**OPERA**  
Metropolitan Opera, Lincoln Center  
Tel: 1-212-362 6000  
www.metopera.org  
Moses and Aaron: by Schoenberg. Conducted by James Levine in a staging by Graham Vick, with sets and costumes by Paul Brown. Cast includes Philip Langridge and John Tomlinson; Feb 17

**THEATRE**  
Classic Stage Company  
Tel: 1-212-239 6200  
The Misanthrope: by Molière, in a new version by Martin Crimp starring Uma Thurman and Roger Rees; opens Feb 16

**Cort Theatre**  
Tel: 1-212-239 6200  
The Blue Room: Sam Mendes directs Nicole Kidman and Ian Glen in David Hare's new version of Schnitzler's La Ronde, transferred from London's Donmar Warehouse

**Ethel Barrymore Theatre**  
Tel: 1-212-239 6200  
Electra: Zoë Wannamaker plays the title role in David Leveaux's production of Sophocles' tragedy, in a new version by Frank McGuinness

**Gramercy Theatre**  
Tel: 1-212-777 4800  
Ashes to Ashes: Karel Reisz directs Lindsay Duncan and David Strathairn in Roundabout Theatre Company's staging of Harold Pinter's new play

**Laura Pels Theatre**  
Tel: 1-212-719 8300  
The Minicola Twins: by Paula Vogel. Black comedy, directed by Joe Mantello. Starring Swosie Kurtz as the twins; opens Feb 18

**Majestic Theatre, Brooklyn Academy of Music**  
Tel: 1-718-636 4100  
Blue Heart: by Caryl Churchill. Double-bill of two one-act plays, first seen at the Royal Court in London. The director is Max Stafford-Clark

**Manhattan Theatre Club**  
Tel: 1-212-581 1212  
Captains Courageous: new musical based on Kipling's yarn, directed by Lynne Meadow with music by Frederick Freyer. Cast includes Treat Williams and Brandon Espinoza; opens Feb 16

## NEWCASTLE

**CONCERT**  
City Hall  
Tel: 44-191-261 2606  
Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra: conducted by Jun'ichi Hirokami in a programme of French music including Canteloube's Songs of the Auvergne and Berlioz' Symphonie Fantastique, with mezzo soprano Della Jones; Feb 19

## PARIS

**CONCERTS**  
Salle Pleyel  
Tel: 33-1-4561 6589  
Orchestre de Paris: conducted by Christoph von Dohnányi in works by Donatoni, Bloch and Beethoven. With cello soloist Eric Picard; Feb 17, 18

**Théâtre des Champs Elysées**  
Tel: 33-1-4952 5050  
● Orchestre National de France: conducted by Jerzy Sankow in works by Haydn, Mozart, Mendelssohn and Schubert, with clarinet soloist Alessandro Carbonare; Feb 14  
● Orchestre National de France: conducted by Pinchas Steinberg in works by d'Indy, Saint-Saëns and Prokofiev, with piano soloist Jean-Philippe Collard; Feb 19

**EXHIBITION**  
Grand Palais  
Tel: 33-1-4413 1730  
Un ami de Cézanne et de Van Gogh: le docteur Gachet (1828-1909). Exhibition devoted to the doctor and painter who was a friend to Cézanne, Pissarro, Monet and Renoir as well as to Van Gogh, who famously spent the last weeks of his life with Gachet at Auvers-sur-Oise; to Apr 26, then

transferring to New York

**Musée du Louvre**  
Tel: 33-1-4020 5151  
www.louvre.fr  
Eternal monuments of Ramses II: New Theban excavations. Display of the latest archaeological findings from the Egyptian pharaoh's tomb; to May 10

**OPERA**  
Théâtre des Champs Elysées  
Tel: 33-1-4952 5050  
Opéra National de Lyon: Zelmira, by Rossini. Conducted by Maurizio Benini in a staging by Yannis Kokkos. The title role is sung by Mariella Davis; Feb 15, 17

## PERUGIA

**EXHIBITIONS**  
Galleria Nazionale dell'Umbria  
Tel: 39-075 574 1247  
Seato Angelico and Benozzo Gozzoli: Renaissance Painters. Organised to mark the 500th anniversary of Fra Angelico's death, this show includes missing sections of his Polittico dei Domenicani, lent by the Vatican so that the whole, restored polyptych can be seen in its entirety; to Apr 11

## ROME

**EXHIBITIONS**  
Palazzo delle Esposizioni  
Tel: 39-06-474 5903  
Poussin: Early Years in Rome. Display of 41 works produced between 1624 and 1628. The centrepiece is 'The Sacking of the temple in Jerusalem by Titus' (1925/6), commissioned by the Barberini family and rediscovered by Denis Mahon, the show's curator. Includes major public and private loans from Europe and the US; to Mar 1

**Palazzo Venezia**  
Tel: 39-06-841 2312  
'700 Veneziano: Capolavori da Ca' Rezzonico. Display of 18th century Venetian art, lent by the Venetian museum to the Palazzo Venezia, which once housed the city's ambassador to Rome. Includes works by Canaletto, Guardi, Longhi and Carlevaris, and Tiepolo's fresco cycle made for his villa at Zianigo; to Feb 18

## SENDAI

**EXHIBITION**  
Miyagi Museum of Art  
The Carmen Thyssen-Bornemisza Collection: touring show of 94 paintings, ranging from the 18th century to the early 20th. Highlights include 19th century Spanish works and works by American painters; to Mar 14

## TAMPERE

**EXHIBITION**  
Sara Hildén Art Museum  
Tel: 358-9-214 3134  
www.tampere.fi/hilden  
Tony Cragg: 33 sculptures and a large number of drawings by the British-born artist, now working in Germany. The works on display are from the period 1988-1998; to May 9

## TOKYO

**CONCERTS**  
Sunshy Hall  
Tel: 81-3-3584 9999  
● English Chamber Orchestra: conducted by Frank Peter Zimmermann in works by Holst, Mozart and Beethoven; Feb 13  
● NHK Symphony Orchestra: conducted by Evgeny Svetlanov in works by Prokofiev and Beethoven, with piano soloist Nikolai Petrov; Feb 17, 18  
● Tokyo City Philharmonic: conducted by Tajihiro Iimori in works by Vivaldi and Bruckner; Feb 15

## VIENNA

**EXHIBITION**  
KunstHausWien  
Tel: 43-1-712 0495  
Jean-Michel Basquiat: Paintings and Works on Paper. 100 works on loan from the Mugar Collection make up the first show in Austria devoted to the black-hispanic US artist, who died in 1988 at the age of 27; to May 2

## WASHINGTON

**EXHIBITIONS**  
National Gallery of Art  
Tel: 1-202-737 4215  
www.nga.gov  
● American Impressionism and Realism: The Margaret and Raymond Horowitz Collection. 49 paintings and works on paper. Highlights include works by William Merritt Chase, Theodore Robinson and J. Alden Weir; to May 9  
● Edo: Art in Japan 1615-1868. Consisting of almost 300 works, this exhibition provides a comprehensive survey of Japanese art produced during the prosperous and peaceful Edo period; to Feb 15

**OPERA**  
Washington Opera, Kennedy Center  
Tel: 1-202-295 2400  
www.do-opera.org  
Boris Godunov: by Mussorgsky. Conducted by Isaac Karabitschewsky in the widely-travelled Tarkovsky staging, revived by Stephen Lawless. Samuel Ramey sings the title role; Feb 13, 15, 18

## ZURICH

**EXHIBITION**  
Kunsthaus Zurich  
Tel: 41-1-251 6765  
Chagall, Kandinsky, Malevich and the Russian Avant-garde: exhibition exploring the artistic upheavals of the first two decades of this century. Includes important loans from the State Hermitage Museum in St. Petersburg and provincial Russian museums; to Apr 25

**Arts Guide by Susanna Rustin**  
e-mail: susanna.rustin@ft.com  
Additional listings supplied by Artbase, e-mail: artbase@pi.net



# Weekend Investor

Wall Street

## Froth blown off the internet bubble

John Authers reports on a merger saga that could have wide ramifications

Internet stocks have been taking it in turn to bask in the spotlight. This week it was Lycos, a Massachusetts company based around a search engine - but for the wrong reasons.

Its attempt to merge with USA Networks, a conventional media company with interests in cable television shopping networks, already shows signs of developing into one of the defining sagas of the age.

Lycos is one of the few remaining search engines to have stayed independent. This was supposed to give it scarcity value and, thus, a hefty premium when it was sold. But that is not what happened.

Investors were forced to swallow their disappointment as Lycos recorded a fall of 26 per cent on the day the tie-up was announced. While the stock remains about 70 per cent higher for the year, it was still plain that Lycos executives who had negotiated the deal believed it was worth less than its market valuation.

The Lycos deal led to a sell-off in other internet stocks. Amazon.com, the leading e-commerce site, is now at almost half its level of early January (although still up more than tenfold for the year).

Yahoo!, the biggest search engine, has dropped by a third. At least one layer of froth has been knocked off the top of the internet bubble.

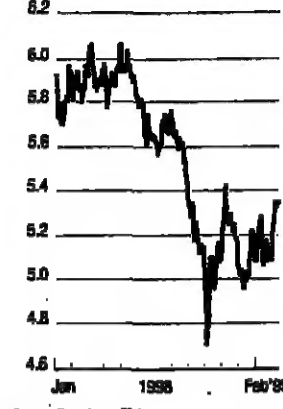
As the week unfolded, the Lycos situation raised more questions about the maturity of the sector. The stock fell further on Wednesday as the suspicion gripped analysts that Lycos executives had been persuaded to take a bad deal for them.

By the end of the week, Lycos was rallying again on hopes that the deal would not take place. The reason was that CMO Investments, which holds a stake of about 20 per cent in Lycos, along with a seat on the board, implied that it might now oppose the merger. It said it "reserves the right to reassess its position as developments unfold".

The saga, which might yet have a few more episodes, was an uncomfortable reminder that the internet sector is still immature.

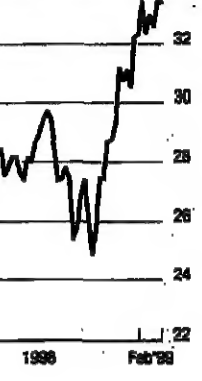
Something must give

US long bond yield



S&amp;P Composite PE ratio

Based on historic earnings



Ground rules for mergers and acquisitions, as well as valuations, are still unclear.

Outside the internet sector, there are some more causes for concern. February has so far been a terrible month for the Treasury bond market.

The yield on the benchmark 30-year bond moved upwards steadily through the week and stood yesterday at 5.5 per cent - up from less than 5.1 per cent at the beginning of the month.

There are good reasons for bond prices to fall. The economy is growing faster than thought, and this means that interest rates may rise. This is not normally unhealthy.

When bond yields rise, generally the price-earnings ratio paid for stocks will fall, as bonds now offer greater value in competition. Again, this is not usually unhealthy, but it should mean that share prices fall.

So far, the corporate earnings season has helped to keep the market from tumbling. Instead, the main indices - the Dow Jones Industrial Average and the Standard & Poor's 500 - are trading in a range around the level at which they opened the year, their brief spurt in early January now only a memory.

However, the results season has revealed very poor earnings growth. According to I/B/E/S, another research firm which follows earnings announcements, earnings for the S&P 500 look as though they will be down by 1.7 per cent for 1998 compared with 1997, slipping from \$45.06 a share in 1997 to \$44.29.

This is an unhealthy combination. According to Hugh Johnson, equity strategist at First Albany: "In a normal cycle, I never worry when the economy is expanding and interest rates are rising. That's the way the textbook was written. But, this time, corporate earnings aren't growing, and stocks are overvalued. Then the rise in interest rates becomes a problem."

Technology stocks provide further cause for concern. Several established companies have recorded results well ahead of expectations, led by Microsoft, the largest of them all. Semiconductor manufacturers have also done better than expected, profiting on the wave of computer sales at the end of last year.

But the overall market is too reliant on technology stocks. Companies such as Microsoft are far more strongly established than Lycos, but this week's gyrations in the Nasdaq Composite index, home of most of the largest tech stocks, are truly alarming - falling almost 4 per cent on Tuesday, and gaining more than 4 per cent on Thursday. Swings like that show profound, and alarming, confusion over valuations. The fundamentals still suggest that valuations are too high.

Dow Jones Ind Average

Monday	9,291.11	- 13.13
Tuesday	9,133.03	- 158.09
Wednesday	9,177.31	+ 44.28
Thursday	9,363.46	+ 186.15
Friday		

London

## So many questions

Martin Dickson reflects on a topsy-turvy week

Can the slowing British economy achieve a soft landing? Or are those who believe this will happen soft in the head?

These questions have hung over the London market for the past week and provided an uncertain backdrop for some sharp changes in sentiment.

The first half of the week saw a mood of gathering gloom so that, by Wednesday, the FTSE 100 index had clocked up its sixth successive day of decline and a cumulative drop of 4 per cent.

On Thursday, though, the market rallied strongly and did so again yesterday morning, only to lose some momentum later in the day. Wall Street, inevitably, was a powerful factor behind the gyrations.

The mood there has been equally volatile, with anxiety growing over the valuation of internet stocks and

concern that the strength of the economy will prompt the Federal Reserve to raise interest rates later in the year.

But the trend of domestic interest rates has also been much on the London market's mind.

When the Bank of England's monetary policy committee made a surprisingly aggressive cut in rates to 5.5 per cent on February 4, it left analysts wondering whether this had been prompted by a much blacker vision of economic prospects.

This week brought something of an explanation: the bank's latest quarterly report said it expected economic activity to be "close to zero" over the next two quarters, due to lower domestic spending and a weaker outlook for the world economy and UK exports.

Manufacturing is in an even worse position. Figures released on Tuesday showed

that its output fell 0.6 per cent in December, while 1998 produced the first year-on-year fall in the UK sales price of manufactured products since records began in 1968.

Worries about a UK recession are hardly new. Many companies have been preparing for the worst for months now.

In recent weeks, however, a more optimistic view of the outlook has been gaining support: that the economy will slow gradually to a soft landing, avoid outright recession and then pick up again.

The bank's report added credence to this, predicting that growth should pick up again in the second half of the year and head to 2.75 per cent in the year to the first quarter of 2001.

The bank would not, of course, be drawn on the direction of interest rates, but the market is expecting a drop to 5 per cent by the



Mary Poppins had a soft landing: maybe not the Footie.

end of this year, and perhaps even lower, on the assumption that inflation remains very subdued.

Equity bulls argue that an economic upturn later this year, coupled with further falls in bond yields as interest rates come down, should allow the market to make gradual headway, even if it remains overstretched by conventional yardsticks.

On top of that, the merger wave shows no sign of slowing, and that will keep pumping institutional cash back into the market.

The optimists were helped by some excellent results this week at the start of the reporting season, with shares in the bank Lloyds TSB shooting up nearly 10 per cent yesterday on better-than-expected figures.

The bank sector rose strongly on the results, with Barclays getting an extra flip from the appointment of a replacement for chief executive Martin Taylor, who resigned last year. The new chief is a career banker, Michael O'Neill, from Bank of America.

British Telecommunications gained 11 per cent on Thursday on strong third-quarter figures, thanks to increased use of the Internet and increased calls to mobile telephones.

But how soundly based is this bullishness? The effects of disinflation, possibly ending in deflation, are far from clear, even though the consensus suggests that active monetary policy and UK plc's strong balance sheet will keep the economy fundamentally healthy.

However, in continental Europe, where interest rates are much lower than in the UK, there are already signs that economic growth is slowing.

And markets could be destabilised by further upsets in emerging markets or a big change of sentiment on Wall Street.

Nor does the London market seem particularly convinced by the optimistic scenario.

This week's gyrations apart, the FTSE 100 index has been moving in a fairly narrow band in recent weeks, seemingly underpinned at around 5,800 but unable to recapture its all-time high of 6,179.

By Thursday night, the Footie was sitting almost exactly where it started the year, while the Mid-250 index was up 7 per cent and the SmallCap index had powered ahead by 8.4 per cent.

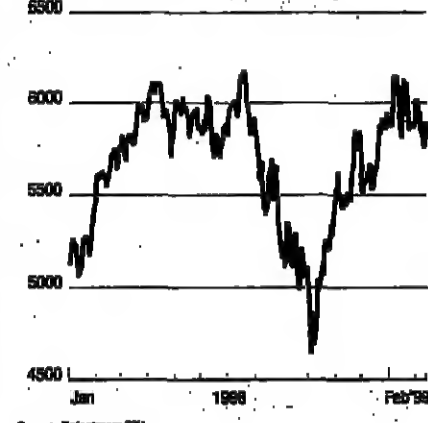
Factors behind the small-cap outperformance include the defensive nature of many 250 companies and the sudden takeover boom among little companies, where valuations have been left behind in the fashion for the big blue chips.

Another sign of possibly deeper market uncertainty is the remarkable share price movements of Lloyds TSB and BT following their results.

Such big jumps on routine corporate news events by such large-capitalisation stocks are unusual. Might that suggest a market that is unusually badly informed or irrational, or maybe a touch of both?

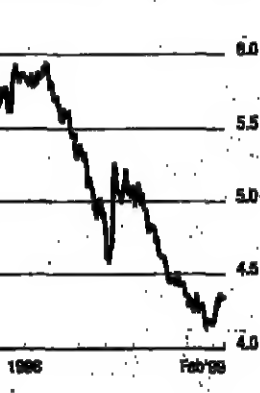
Declining yields underpin the market

FTSE 100 index



10-year benchmark bond yield

%



Highlights of the week

	Price	Change	52 week	52 week	
	Yield	on week	High	Low	
FTSE 100 index	5850.7	+95.4	5770.0	4948.7	Corporate earnings optimism
Bse	8014	-40	1195	625	Profit-taking
Biffon	1354	+204	1674	994	Broker recommendations
BSEB	5084	+394	582	352	Strong analyst recommendations
BT	10444	+117	1048	423	Better than expected figures
BN	408	-414	937	300	Profit-taking
First Leisure	2264	+18	4374	158	Mid ink
Ladbrokes	2094	+284	370	180	Stable takeover benefits
Lentor	382	+57	3844	220	Broker recommendations
PC	614	-54	2254	51	Disappointing figures
Powdermill	885	+1874	9024	2324	\$100m US agreement
Rio Tinto (Pao)	837	+88	888	535	Broker recommendations
Statis	154	+13	1804	794	Ladbrokes takeover
Unilever	5764	+13	741	3494	Recommendation
Vaux	2874	+224	361	159	Mid speculation

## Corporate radar.

FINANCIAL TIMES  
No FT, no comment.

Barry Riley



## Pensioners' purgatory

It could get even tougher for senior citizens

Out there in Eastbourne and Harrogate, the natives are growing restless. My postbag reflects the alarm among Britain's pensioners. "My income has been reduced by 15 per cent," complains one senior citizen, writing even before the latest rate cut. Another suggests, bitterly: "Interest rate reductions are a crude instrument for economic control."

High-interest savings accounts now yield only in the region of 5.5 per cent, compared with 7.5 per cent last summer, and this week's Bank of England inflation report left open the possibility of further cuts. The gross return on popular high street passbook accounts is less than 3 per cent already. The very next interest rate cut from the Bank of England could take bank base rates down to 5 per cent, the lowest since 1971.

Already, the yields on long-dated UK government bonds (gilts) have fallen to 4.4 per cent, the lowest since the 1960s. This is reflected directly in annuity rates, so that £100,000 now will buy an annual income of perhaps £5,500 for a woman of 60, about 14 per cent less than a year ago.

There is a big debate about whether people should save for their old age, but almost no discussion of the annuity rates they should receive. Is the government cutting its borrowing costs largely at the expense of the nation's elderly?

My correspondents appear to be oddly well-informed about the still-worse plight of Japan's pen-

sioners. And although it seemed that Japanese interest rates could not fall any further, yesterday, astonishingly, they did.

Insolvent occupational pension schemes have been cutting pensions in payment. The next crisis for Japan's savers will involve the maturity in 2000 and 2001 of 10-year post office accounts, which were taken out on a vast scale (the equivalent of more than £500bn) in the early 1990s to yield 6 or 7 per cent. The reinvestment rate will be 2 per cent if savers are lucky.

You could, though, argue that to have enjoyed 7 per cent income on a risk-free investment in a zero inflation economy has represented the most amazing good fortune. UK pensioners, too, tend to protest too loudly. Too often, they ignore fundamental investment principles.

One is that long-term savings should not be held in short-term accounts. In the UK they often are, because savers have been misled by persistent monetary mismanagement which has produced a persistent distortion - namely, the reversed or downward-sloping yield curve. This aberration finally will disappear later in 1999.

Another principle is that investments should not be judged by simple interest but by a more fundamental measure: the real total return net of tax. For savings accounts, this means the interest rate after tax less the inflation rate (securities will have capital gains or losses to be added in, too). If you look at savings this way it turns out that, historically, the real threat

to nest eggs has come from high inflation. In 1975, building society savers were receiving 7.5 per cent interest after basic-rate tax, but were hit by 25 per cent inflation. That added up to a net real return of minus 14 per cent.

According to the CSFB equity-gilt study, which tracks long-term investment returns, a typical building society account (since 1986, the Leeds/Halifax Liquid Gold) has delivered an average annual net real return of just 0.3 per cent during the past 20 years. Higher-yielding, if less liquid, products are readily available. And today's Liquid Gold savings rate is only slightly below average in real terms. The eye-catching nominal rate, however, is very much lower: 2.3 per cent against a 20-year average of 6.3 per cent.

There are fond memories of purple patches for the high street investor. In the late 1980s, and again in the early 1990s, nominal net rates topped 7 per cent and real rates hit 3 or 4 per cent. Pensioners should, however, recognise these periods as freakish. They reflect in one case the end of the (Nigel) Lawson boom (while he was chancellor of the exchequer) and, in the other, the Bundesbank's squeeze imposed during the UK's membership of the exchange rate mechanism.

Grumpy Victor Meldrew types should cheer themselves up by focusing instead on the low level of inflation. Soon, the headline rate, now 2.5 per cent, will (thanks to cheaper mortgages) sink far below the underlying rate that the Bank targets at 2.5

per cent. The underlying rate also is likely to undershoot, although the Bank does not say so because it cannot conceive the possibility that it might miss its target.

In conditions of low inflation and weak economic growth, high street savings accounts will never give a significant real return. They can offer safety and convenience only. The inflation illusion has deceived savers into hoping otherwise. In fact, pensioners must now be prepared to live off their capital explicitly rather than have inflation do it for them by stealth. This, after all, is the principle of traditional annuities, conceived in an era of zero inflation.

Viewed from Eastbourne in mid-winter, though, it all seems so monstrously unfair. The UK economy is being run to benefit the young, with their ever-cheaper mortgages and credit cards. Newspaper front pages each month gleefully celebrate the impoverishment of the saver. Meanwhile, the cost of long-term care is rising rapidly, whatever the general RPI statistics may say.

But there is another side to this. People who have financed their retirement through long-term savings have had excellent returns. It is less likely, however, that the generation below them will be so lucky. The stock market cannot continue to return 12 per cent a year in real terms, as UK equities have since 1979.

Such people do not suspect it yet, but theirs might be the real hard luck story.

For an interactive guide to personal finance, visit <http://www.FTQuicken.co.uk>



## WEEKEND INVESTOR

## Directors' dealings

## Interior designers in purchase

Directors have become much less active lately, with volume of trade falling particularly low as many companies enter their closed period ahead of results in March, writes Chris Hill.

Even so, there were some deals. One of the largest purchases was at Havelock Europe, the troubled commercial interior designer,

where four directors picked up more than £200,000 of stock. The biggest buyer was William Kennedy, chairman, who acquired 200,000 shares at 31p. This follows acquisition of Kwik-Save's in-house printing department for £24m.

Amberley's Roger Fletcher, a non-executive, has made two major buys

within a month. In mid-January, he spent £58,000 on shares, and has just acquired another 100,000 at 56p. Amberley produces specialty chemicals and minerals and has sold its one-time core business, the damp-proofing arm Murprotec, to its management team for £1.4m.

There was selling by three

directors at Dixons Group. Between them, they netted £239,000 when they took advantage of the company's soaring share price and disposed of 23,824 shares. Dixons' stock has almost doubled in value since the launch of Freeserve, its free Internet service. The company says it now has more than 1m subscribers.

Bids and deals  
Crying foul

The Independent Television Commission has called for a halt to British Sky Broadcasting's proposed £623m takeover of Manchester United football club on the grounds that it could distort the free market in broadcast rights to matches, writes David Blythe.

The TVC, the main regulator for the television industry, has referred

BSkyB's bid to the Monopolies and Mergers Commission. Its verdict could affect the planned takeover of Newcastle United by NTL, the cable company.

Microsoft, the world's largest software group, and British Telecommunications

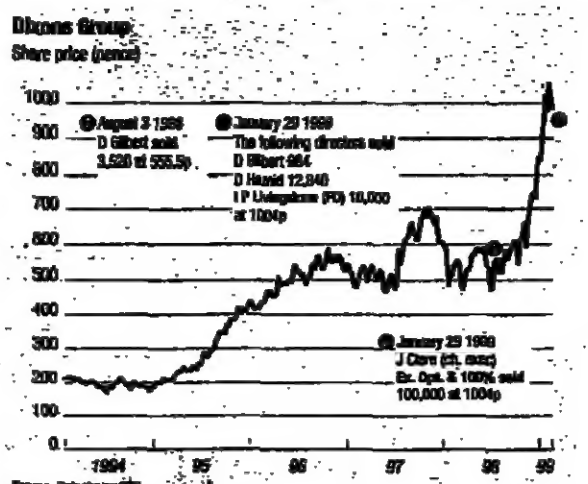
have formed an alliance to provide their customers with

wireless access to the Internet and corporate computer networks. The scheme is Microsoft's first move into telecommunications in the UK and a challenge to Syncom, a joint initiative between Motorola of the US, Ericsson of Sweden, Nokia of Finland and Psion of the UK.

Rupert Murdoch's News Corporation and Canal Plus, the French pay-TV company,

are exploring pooling their European pay television interests to create a dominant player in the sector.

The move is Murdoch's latest attempt to get a foothold in continental European broadcasting after failing to form broadcasting alliances in Germany and Italy.



Directors' share dealings  
Transactions in own companies  
Jan - Dec, February 1999

Company	Sector	Shares	Value £'000	No of directors
SALES				
ARM Holdings	EMER	110000	2088	2
WT Foods	FOOD	160000	59	1
Eurocom Pub	Media	892	16	1
Freemove Group	Media	2459438	782	1
Debenhams	Retail	30000	110	1
Dixons Group	Retail	23824	239	3
Black Leisure	Retail	75000	145	2
Dixons Group	Retail	100000	1004	1
BAA	Travel	51330	396	1
PURCHASES				
BPS Inds	BM&M	10000	24	1
Amberley Group	Chem	100000	68	1
Havelock Europe	Cons	655320	203	4
Abacus Polar	Diet	17488	17	1
BTR Globe	Eng	9775	25	1
Eadie Holdings	Eng	250000	219	1
GEI Intl	Eng	128500	44	2
Villiers Group	Eng	250000	27	1
Hedgewood	FOFP	100000	115	1
Freemove Group	Media	155000	50	1
Gerland Whitley	Other	25000	24	1
St Ives	PP&P	4000	16	1
Alkerm	Retail	17500	30	1
Style Holdings	Retail	25000	31	1
Uno plc	Retail	525000	158	1

Companies must notify the Stock Exchange within five working days of a share transaction by a director. This list contains all transactions (listed and unlisted) involving directors of companies in the FTSE 100, with a value over £10,000. Information released by the Stock Exchange. Shares traded are ordinary, unless otherwise stated. 1p = 100p.

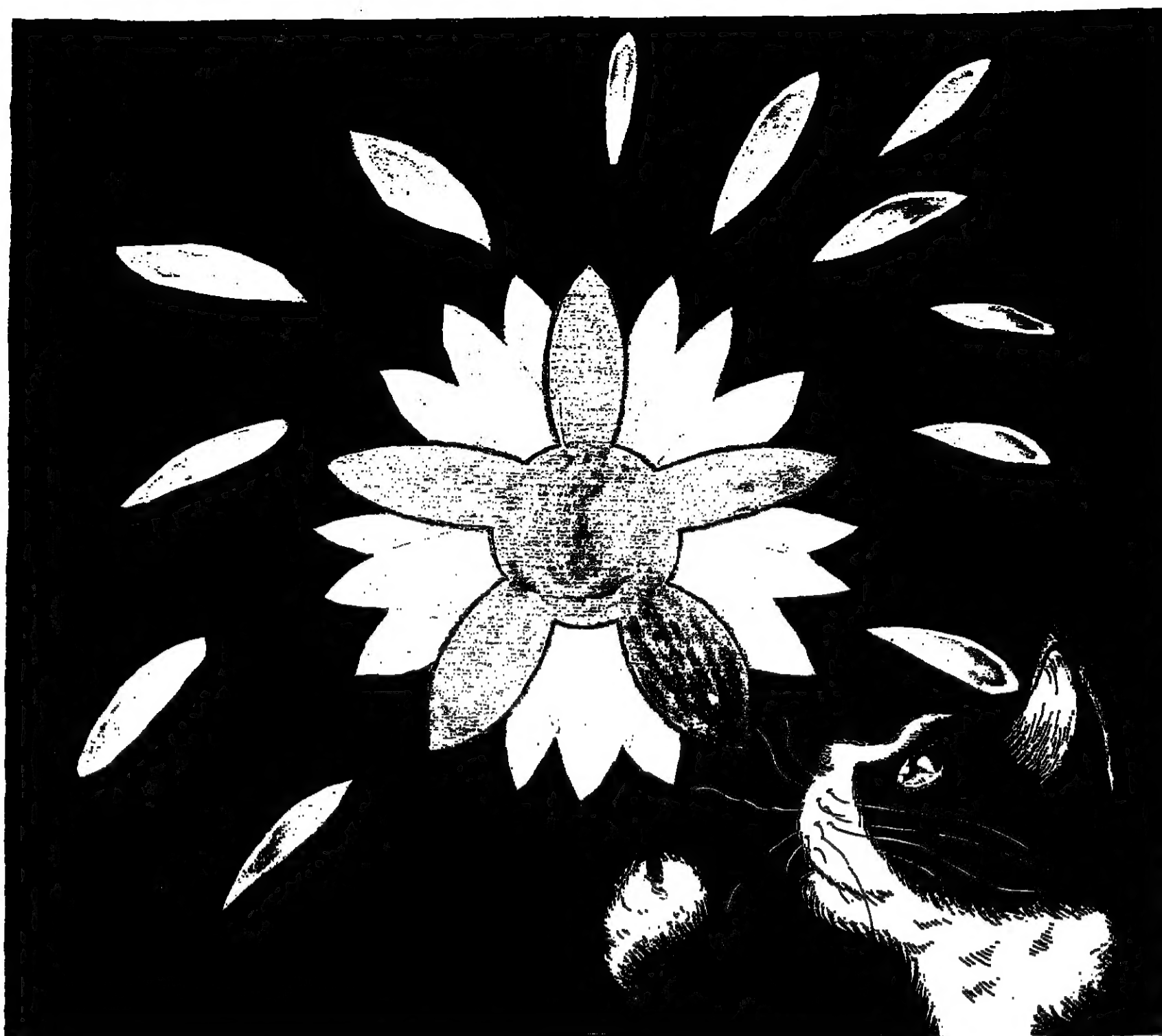
## Last week's interim results

Company	Sector	Year to	Profit	Share	Dividend
Almeco	Met	Dec	16.4 (17.3)	15.7 (22.7)	8 (7)
Almeco	Met	Nov	3.86 (4.28)	15.7 (22.7)	2.45 (2.45)
Almeco	Met	Oct	4.06 (4.07)	15.7 (22.7)	0.3 (0.2)
Almeco	Met	Sep	94.9 (95.5)	15.7 (22.7)	-
Almeco	Met	Aug	3.69 (2.54)	15.7 (22.7)	-
Almeco	Met	Jul	3.10 (3.10)	15.7 (22.7)	-
Almeco	Met	Jun	53.2 (128.8)	15.7 (22.7)	2.75 (2.75)
Almeco	Met	May	2.03 (2.74)	15.7 (22.7)	-
Almeco	Met	Apr	0.441 (0.254)	15.7 (22.7)	0.17 (0.12)
Almeco	Met	Mar	0.114 (0.103)	15.7 (22.7)	-
Almeco	Met	Feb	0.088 (0.054)	15.7 (22.7)	-
Almeco	Met	Jan	1.18 (1.14)	15.7 (22.7)	2.5 (2.5)
Almeco	Met	Dec	128.35 (142.3)	15.7 (22.7)	2.05 (1.5)
Almeco	Met	Nov	0.378 (0.006)	15.7 (22.7)	-
Almeco	Met	Oct	2.1 (3.8)	15.7 (22.7)	-
Almeco	Met	Sep	13.2 (3.8)	15.7 (22.7)	1.3 (1.05)
Almeco	Met	Aug	34.5 (32)	15.7 (22.7)	-
Almeco	Met	Jul	1.22 (1.06)	15.7 (22.7)	-
Almeco	Met	Jun	0.404 (0.23)	15.7 (22.7)	2.2 (2.2)
Almeco	Met	May	2.5 (1.8)	15.7 (22.7)	0.4 (0.4)
Almeco	Met	Apr	5.63 (8.35)	15.7 (22.7)	2.85 (2.85)

Figures in parentheses are for the corresponding period. Dividends are shown net of tax per share, except where otherwise indicated. 1p = 100p. 1st year value per share. 2nd year value per share. 3rd year value per share. 4th year value per share. 5th year value per share. 6th year value per share. 7th year value per share. 8th year value per share. 9th year value per share. 10th year value per share. 11th year value per share. 12th year value per share. 13th year value per share. 14th year value per share. 15th year value per share. 16th year value per share. 17th year value per share. 18th year value per share. 19th year value per share. 20th year value per share. 21st year value per share. 22nd year value per share. 23rd year value per share. 24th year value per share. 25th year value per share. 26th year value per share. 27th year value per share. 28th year value per share. 29th year value per share. 30th year value per share. 31st year value per share. 32nd year value per share. 33rd year value per share. 34th year value per share. 35th year value per share. 36th year value per share. 37th year value per share. 38th year value per share. 39th year value per share. 40th year value per share. 41st year value per share. 42nd year value per share. 43rd year value per share. 44th year value per share. 45th year value per share. 46th year value per share. 47th year value per share. 48th year value per share. 49th year value per share. 50th year value per share. 51st year value per share. 52nd year value per share. 53rd year value per share. 54th year value per share. 55th year value per share. 56th year value per share. 57th year value per share. 58th year value per share. 59th year value per share. 60th year value per share. 61st year value per share. 62nd year value per share. 63rd year value per share. 64th year value per share. 65th year value per share. 66th year value per share. 67th year value per share. 68th year value per share. 69th year value per share. 70th year value per share. 71st year value per share. 72nd year value per share. 73rd year value per share. 74th year value per share. 75th year value per share. 76th year value per share. 77th year value per share. 78th year value per share. 79th year value per share. 80th year value per share. 81st year value per share. 82nd year value per share. 83rd year value per share. 84th year value per share. 85th year value per share. 86th year value per share. 87th year value per share. 88th year value per share. 89th year value per share. 90th year value per share. 91st year value per share. 92nd year value per share. 93rd year value per share. 94th year value per share. 95th year value per share. 96th year value per share. 97th year value per share. 98th year value per share. 99th year value per share. 100th year value per share. 101st year value per share. 102nd year value per share. 103rd year value per share. 104th year value per share. 105th year value per share. 106th year value per share. 107th year value per share. 108th year value per share. 109th year value per share. 110th year value per share. 111th year value per share. 112th year value per share. 113th year value per share. 114th year value per share. 115th year value per share. 116th year value per share. 117th year value per share. 118th year value per share. 119th year value per share. 120th year value per share. 121st year value per share. 122nd year value per share. 123rd year value per share. 124th year value per share. 125th year value per share. 126th year value per share. 127th year value per share. 128th year value per share. 129th year value per share. 130th year value per share. 131st year value per share. 132nd year value per share. 133rd year value per share. 134th year value per share. 135th year value per share. 136th year value per share. 137th year value per share. 138th year value per share. 139th year value per share. 140th year value per share. 141st year value per share. 142nd year value per share. 143rd year value per share. 144th year value per share. 145th year value per share. 146th year value per share. 147th year value per share. 148th year value per share. 149th year value per share. 150th year value per share. 151st year value per share. 152nd year value per share. 153rd year value per share. 154th year value per share. 155th year value per share. 156th year value per share. 157th year value per share. 158th year value per share. 159th year value per share. 160th year value per share. 161st year value per share. 162nd year value per share. 163rd year value per share. 164th year value per share. 165th year value per share. 166th year value per share. 167th year value per share. 168th year value per share. 169th year value per share. 170th year value per share. 171st year value per share. 172nd year value per share. 173rd year value per share. 174th year value per share. 175th year value per share. 176th year value per share. 177th year value per share. 178th year value per share. 179th year value per share. 180th year value per share. 181st year value per share. 182nd year value per share. 183rd year value per share. 184th year value per share. 185th year value per share. 186th year value per share. 187th year value per share. 188th year value per share. 189th year value per share. 190th year value per share. 191st year value per share. 192nd year value per share. 193rd year value per share. 194th year value per share. 195th year value per share. 196th year value per share. 197th year value per share. 198th year value per share. 199th year value per share. 200th year value per share. 201st year value per share. 202nd year value per share. 203rd year value per share. 204th year value per share. 205th year value per share. 206th year value per share. 207th year value per share. 208th year value per share. 209th year value per share. 210th year value per share. 211st year value per share. 212nd year value per share. 213th year value per share. 214th year value per share. 215th year value per share. 216th year value per share. 217th year value per share. 218th year value per share. 219th year value per share. 220th year value per share. 221st year value per share. 222nd year value per share. 223rd year value per share. 224th year value per share. 225th year value per share. 226th year value per share. 227th year value per share. 228th year value per share. 229th year value per share. 230th year value per share. 231st year value per share. 232nd year value per share. 233rd year value per share. 234th year value per share. 235th year value per share. 236th year value per share. 237th year value per share. 238th year value per share. 239th year value per share. 240th year value per share. 241st year value per share. 242nd year value per share. 243rd year value per share. 244th year value per share. 245th year value per share. 246th year value per share. 247th year value per share. 248th year value per share. 249th year value per share. 250th year value per share. 251st year value per share. 252nd year value per share. 253rd year value per share. 254th year value per share. 255th year value per share. 256th year value per share. 257th year value per share. 258th year value per share. 259th year value per share. 260th year value per share. 261st year value per share. 262nd year value per share. 263rd year value per share. 264th year value per share. 265th year value per share. 266th year value per share. 267th year value per share. 268th year value per share. 269th year value per share. 270th year value per share. 271st year value per share. 272nd year value per share. 273rd year value per share. 274th year value per share. 275th year value per share. 276th year value per share. 277th year value per share. 278th year value per share. 279th year value per share. 280th year value per share. 281st year value per share. 282nd year value per share. 283rd year value per share. 284th year value per share. 285th year value per share. 286th year value per share. 287th year value per share. 288th year value per share. 289th year value per share. 290th year value per share. 291st year value per share. 292nd year value per share. 293rd year value per share. 294th year value per share. 295th year value per share. 296th year value per share. 297th year value per share. 298th year value per share. 299th year value per share. 300th year value per share. 301st year value per share. 302nd year value per share. 303rd year value per share. 304th year value per share. 305th year value per share. 306th year value per share. 307th year value per share. 308th year value per share. 309th year value per share. 310th year value per share. 311st year value per share. 312nd year value per share. 313th year value per share. 314th year value per share. 315th year value per share. 316th year value per share. 317th year value per share. 318th year value per share. 319th year value per share. 320th year value per share. 321st year value per share. 322nd year value per share. 323rd year value per share. 324th year value per share. 325th year value per share. 326th year value per share. 327th year value per share. 328th year value per share. 329th year value per share. 330th year value per share. 331st year value per share. 332nd year value per share. 333rd year value per share. 334th year value per share. 335th year value per share. 336th year value per share. 337th year value per share. 338th year value per share. 339th year value per share. 340th year value per share. 341st year value per share. 342nd year value per share. 343rd year value per share. 344th year value per share. 345th year value per share. 346th year value per share. 347th year value per share. 348th year value per share. 349th year value per share. 350th year value per share. 351st year value per share. 352nd year value per share. 353rd year value per share. 354th year value per share. 355th year value per share. 356th year value per share. 357th year value per share. 358th year value per share. 359th year value per share. 360th year value per share. 361st year value per share. 362nd year value per share. 363rd year value per share. 364th year value per share. 365th year value per share. 366th year value per share. 367th year value per share. 368th year value per share. 369th year value per share. 370th year value per share. 371st year value per share. 372nd year value per share. 373rd year value per share. 374th year value per share. 375th year value per share. 376th year value per share. 377th year value per share. 378th year value per share. 379th year value per share. 380th year value per share. 381st year value per share. 382nd year value per share. 383rd year value per share. 384th year value per share. 385th year value per share. 386th year value per share. 387th year value per share. 388th year value per share. 389th year value per share. 390th year value per share. 391st year value per share. 392nd year value per share. 393rd year value per share. 394th year value per share. 395th year value per share. 396th year value per share. 397th year value per share. 398th year value per share. 399th year value per share. 400th year value per share. 401st year value per share. 402nd year value per share. 403rd year value per share. 404th year value per share. 405th year value per share. 406th year value per share. 407th year value per share. 408th year value per share. 409th year value per share. 410th year value per share. 411st year value per share. 412nd year value per share. 413th year value per share. 414th year value per share. 415th year value per share. 416th year value per share. 417th year value per share. 418th year value per share. 419th year value per share. 420th year value per share. 421st year value per share. 422nd year value per share. 423rd year value per share. 424th year value per share. 425th year value per share. 426th year value per share. 427th year value per share. 428th year value per share. 429th year value per share. 430th year value per share. 431st year value per share. 432nd year value per share. 433rd year value per share. 434th year value per share. 435th year value per share. 436th year value per share. 437th year value per share. 438th year value per share. 439th year value per share. 440th year value per share. 441st year value per share. 442nd year value per share. 443rd year value per share. 444th year value per share. 445th year value per share. 446th year value per share. 447th year value per share. 448th year value per share. 449th year value per share. 450th year value per share. 451st year value per share. 452nd year value per share. 453rd year value per share. 454th year value per share. 455th year value per share. 456th year value per share. 457th year value per share. 458th year value per share. 459th year value per share. 460th year value per share. 461st year value per share. 462nd year value per share. 463rd year value per share. 464th year value per share. 465th year value per share. 466th year value per share. 467th year value per share. 468th year value per share. 469th year value per share. 470th year value per share. 471st year value per share. 472nd year value per share. 473rd year value per share. 474th year value per share. 475th year value per share. 476th year value per share. 477th year value per share. 478th year value per share. 479th year value per share. 480th year value per share. 481st year value per share. 482nd year value per share. 483rd year value per share. 484th year value per share. 485th year value per share. 486th year value per share. 487th year value per share. 488th year value per share. 489th year value per share. 490th year value per share. 491st year value per share. 492nd year value per share. 493rd year value per share. 494th year value per share. 495th year value per share. 496th year value per share. 497th year value per share. 498th year value per share. 499th year value per share. 500th year value per share. 501st year value per share. 502nd year value per share. 503rd year value per share. 504th year value per share. 505th year value per share. 506th year value per share. 507th year value per share. 508th year value per share. 509th year value per share. 510th year value per share. 511st year value per share. 512nd year value per share. 513th year value per share. 514th year value per share. 515th year value per share. 516th year value per share. 517th year value per share. 518th year value per share. 519th year value per share. 520th year value per share. 521st year value per share. 522nd year value per share. 523rd year value per share. 524th year value per share. 525th year value per share. 526th year value per share. 527th year value per share. 528th year value per share. 529th year value per share. 530th year value per share. 531st year value per share. 532nd year value per share. 533rd year value per share. 534th year value per share. 535th year value per share. 536th year value per share. 537th year value per share. 538th year value per share. 539th year value per share. 540th year value per share. 541st year value per share. 542nd year value per share. 543rd year value per share. 544th year value per share. 545th year value per share. 546th year value per share. 547th year value per share. 548th year value per share. 549th year value per share. 550th year value per share. 551st year value per share. 552nd year value per share. 553rd year value per share. 554th year value per share. 555th year value per share. 556th year value per share. 557th year value per share. 558th year value per share. 559th year value per share. 560th year value per share. 561st year value per share. 562nd year value per share. 563rd year value per share. 564th year value per share. 565th year value per share. 566th year value per share. 567th year value per share. 568th year value per share. 569th year value per share. 570th year value per share. 571st year value per share. 572nd year value per share. 573rd year value per share. 574th year value per share. 575th year value per share. 576th year value per share. 577th year value per share. 578th year value per share. 579th year value per share. 580th year value per share. 581st year value per share. 582nd year value per share. 583rd year value per share. 584th year value per share. 585th year value per share. 586th year value per share. 587th year value per share. 588th year value per share. 589th year value per share. 590th year value per share. 591st year value per share. 592nd year value per share. 593rd year value per share. 594th year value per share. 595th year value per share. 596th year value per share. 597th year value per share. 598th year value per share. 599th year value per share. 600th year value per share. 601st year value per share. 602nd year value per share. 603rd year value per share. 604th year value per share. 605th year value per share. 606th year value per share. 607th year value per share. 608th year value per share. 609th year value per share. 610th year value per share. 611st year value per share. 612nd year value per share. 613th year value per share. 614th year value per share. 615th year value per share. 616th year value per share. 617th year value per share. 618th year value per share. 619th year value per share. 620th year value per share. 621st year value per share. 622nd year value per share. 623rd year value per share. 624th year value per share. 625th year value per share. 626th year value per share. 627th year value per share. 628th year value per share. 629th year value per share. 630th year value per share. 631st year value per share. 632nd year value per share. 633rd year value per share. 634th year value per share. 635th year value per share. 636th year value per share. 637th year value per share. 638th year value per share. 639th year value per share. 640th year value per share. 641st year value per share. 642nd year value per share. 643rd year value per share. 644th year value per share. 645th year value per share. 646th year value per share. 647th year value per share. 648th year value per share. 649th year value per share. 650th year value per share. 651st year value per share. 652nd year value per share. 653rd year value per share. 654th year value per share. 655th year value per share. 656th year value per share. 657th year value per share. 658th year value per share. 659th year value per share. 660th year value per share. 661st year value per share. 662nd year value per share. 663rd year value per share. 664th year value per share. 665th year value per share. 666th year value per share. 667th year value per share. 668th year value per share. 669th year value per share. 670th year value per share. 671st year value per share. 672nd year value per share. 673rd year value per share. 674th year value per share. 675th year value per share. 676th year value per share. 677th year value per share. 678th year value per share. 679th year value per share. 680th year value per share. 681st year value per share. 682nd year value per share. 683rd year value per share. 684th year value per share. 685th year value per share. 686th year value per share. 687th year value per share. 688th year value per share. 689th year value per share. 690th year value per share. 691st year value per share. 692nd year value per share. 693rd year value per share. 694th year value per share. 695th year value per share. 696th year value per share. 697th year value per share. 698th year value per share. 699th year value per share. 700th year value per share. 701st year value per share. 702nd year value per share. 703rd year value per share. 704th year value per share. 705th year value per share. 706th year value per share. 707th year value per share. 708th year value per share. 709th year value per share. 710th year value per share. 711st year value per share. 712nd year value per share. 713th year value per share. 714th year value per share. 715th year value per share. 716th year value per share. 717th year value per share. 718th year value per share. 719th year value per share. 720th year value per share. 721st year value per share. 722nd year value per share. 723rd year value per share. 724th year value per share. 725th year value per share. 726th year value per share. 727th year value per share. 728th year value per share. 729th year value per share. 730th year value per share. 731st year value per share. 732nd year value per share. 733rd year value per share. 734th year value per share. 735th year value per share. 736th year value per share. 737th year value per share. 738th year value per share. 739th year value per share. 740th year value per share. 741st year value per share. 742nd year value per share. 743rd year value per share. 744th year value per share. 745th year value per share. 746th year value per share. 747th year value per share. 748th year value per share. 749th year value per share. 750th year value per share. 751st year value per share. 752nd year value per share. 753rd year value per share. 754th year value per share. 755th year value per share. 756th year value per share. 757th year value per share. 758th year value per share. 759th year value per share. 760th year value per share. 761st year value per share. 762nd year value per share. 763rd year value per share. 764th year value per share. 765th year value per share. 766th year value per share. 767th year value per share. 768th year value per share. 769th year value per share. 770th year value per share. 771st year value per share. 772nd year value per share. 773rd year value per share. 774th year value per share. 775th year value per share. 776th year value per share. 777th year value per share. 778th year value per share. 779th year value per share. 780th year value per share. 781st year value per share. 782nd year value per share. 783rd year value per share. 784th year value per share. 785th year value per share. 786th year value per share. 787th year value per share. 788th year value per share. 789th year value per share. 790th year value per share. 791st year value per share. 792nd year value per share. 793rd year value per share. 794th year value per share. 795th year value per share. 796th year value per share. 797th year value per share. 798th year value per share. 799th year value per share. 800th year value per share. 801st year value per share. 802nd year value per share. 803rd year value per share. 804th year value per share. 805th year value per share. 806th year value per share. 807th year value per share. 808th year value per share. 809th year value per share. 810th year value per share. 811st year value per share. 812nd year value per share. 813th year value per share. 814th year value per share



## FT WEEKEND



Arcadia

## Tet's traditional tyranny

The festival's rituals are certainly not to the taste of every Vietnamese, writes Jonathan Birchall

In the flower market in Hanoi's old quarter, the pre-holiday frenzy is at its height. Tough-looking market women brandish arm-length branches of dark red apricot blossom. Eager shoppers struggle to carry waist-high miniature trees laden with small orange fruits. Enormous bundles of luminous yellow chrysanthemums explode with colour beneath seasonably grey skies.

When Vietnam begins the great lunar new year holiday of Tet on Tuesday, the apricot blossom will be on display in homes across the city, to symbolise the coming spring. The fruit-laden kumquat trees will have been given as gifts, representing hopes for prosperity in the coming Year of the Cat (not to be confused with China's forthcoming Year of the Rabbit).

And the yellow chrysanthemums will be just pretty to look at, as the rush of shopping and cleaning and house-painting gives way to long, slow days of eating and drinking and general conviviality.

"Tet," says my Vietnamese-foreigners textbook, "is the most important festival in Vietnam, an occasion for the family to be together, in order to welcome the spring with flowers, fire-crackers and with delicious food."

The fire-crackers sadly are now gone, banned by the authorities for safety reasons several years ago. The special Tet food is also not universally hailed as delicious - particularly *banh chung*, a square cake of bean paste, glutinous pork fat, fermented fish sauce and sticky rice, all

wrapped in banana leaves.

Last Tet, a Vietnamese friend sheepishly admitted she didn't really like *banh chung*, while loading more on to my plate. "It's traditional," she said, apologetically. Indeed, according to tradition, the cake was first made 2,000 years ago by a prince of the Hung dynasty. For Hanoians, eating it at Tet comes close to a national obligation. But then Tet in Hanoi is very much about celebrating Vietnamese cultural identity, something not always directly related to having fun.

In his office overlooking the city's Lenin Park, Tran Quoc Chiem is also gearing up for Tet. Quoc Chiem might be considered one of the guardians of Vietnam's culture; he is well known in Hanoi as a leading performer of the traditional popular drama known as *cheo* (pronounced chay-oh), a blend of music, songs and drama which has deep roots in the north of Vietnam.

Now in his 40s, he has the well-fed look of a successful Vietnamese businessman, an impression heightened by a strident silk shirt and a large gold watch on his wrist. His business card announces him to be an "eminent artist".

"Cheo was traditionally performed in the villages at special festivals, and especially during the spring time and Tet," he told me over tea. "And in Hanoi now, the Tet period is a good time for people to come and see cheo."

According to Huu Ngoc, octogenarian author of *Sketches for a Portrait of Vietnamese Culture*, and Hanoi's leading official cultural critic, watching *cheo* is as

much an essential part of Vietnam's unique cultural identity as eating *banh chung*.

"Cheo was born around the 10th or 11th century, in the cradle of our culture," he said, in deliberate English accented with a mix of Vietnamese and French. "That is to say in the Red River Delta, because authentic Vietnamese culture was, as you know, born in the north. Cheo is

much an essential part of Vietnam's unique cultural identity as eating *banh chung*.

much an essential part of Vietnam's unique cultural identity as eating *banh chung*.

much an essential part of Vietnam's unique cultural identity as eating *banh chung*.

much an essential part of Vietnam's unique cultural identity as eating *banh chung*.

much an essential part of Vietnam's unique cultural identity as eating *banh chung*.

much an essential part of Vietnam's unique cultural identity as eating *banh chung*.

much an essential part of Vietnam's unique cultural identity as eating *banh chung*.

much an essential part of Vietnam's unique cultural identity as eating *banh chung*.

would turn out in Hanoi to see Quoc Chiem perform, in dramas such as "Thi Mau goes to the Pagoda," a tragic but comic tale of virtue not rewarded, and "Tam Cam," a familiar story involving an ugly step-sister, a handsome prince and a missing shoe.

With its earthy humour, and a tradition of ridiculing unjust landlords, *cheo* has always been the darling of the ruling Communists, with dozens of officially backed *cheo* groups nominally in existence throughout the northern provinces.

There is even supposed to be an Armed Forces *cheo* group - their performances presumably wrapped in official secrecy - while Huu Ngoc recalls that sometime in the 1970s an East German playwright produced a *cheo* version of Bertolt Brecht's *Caucasian Circle*.

But *cheo*, like *banh chung*, is also struggling to please the increasingly material tastes of urban Hanoi. The city's main *cheo* theatre, on Hanoi's Kim Ma street, was shuttered and closed soon after its opening in 1994, the victim of unspecified "structural" problems. Shows are instead theatricalised scheduled for three nights a week in a small hall beneath Quoc Chiem's office. But they only take place if at least eight tickets are sold, which does not always happen.

While foreign tourists go by the bus-load to see twice nightly performances of the famed Hanoi Water Puppets, *cheo* is lucky to get a crowd of 20, most of them inevitably foreigners. "Cheo performance is challenging because it involves dance, singing and

acting," one young woman performer told me. It also involves coping with an audience which does not get the jokes.

"I know that these days people, especially young people, have started listening to lots of rock and rap music. But this is a new-fangled thing," said Quoc Chiem gamely. "And I think that they will eventually want to come back to what is traditional and they'll come back to *cheo* again. Sometimes it makes people feel better when they listen to this kind of traditional music."

Perhaps he is right. The continued existence of *banh chung*, for example, is a testament to the longevity of Vietnamese cultural icons. In the meantime, 80 per cent of the *cheo* group's funding comes from the state, and the Communist party has stressed its commitment to preserving "cultural heritage".

And this Tet, the party is already demonstrating its interest. On the street outside my house a new poster appeared ahead of the holiday, courtesy of the local people's committee, which is responsible for ensuring the neighbourhood's social and political well-being.

The poster features hand-painted pictures of a woman in traditional Vietnamese dress, a coloured Tet festival flag, and an old stringed musical instrument, with the inspiring slogan: "Building an advanced Vietnamese culture is the essence of national identity." *Cheo* might no longer appeal to the popular taste. But its survival in the Year of the Cat and on into the 21st century is now official party policy.

Metropolis

## Cheap ballet but not many buns

Andrew Jack in St Petersburg tries living on the legacy of communism

You don't immediately get the impression that Misha and Ekaterina are victims in Russia's economic crisis. They have a two-room apartment in St Petersburg, a car, even a video recorder and a compact disc player - a reminder of when times were better.

It is little things that reveal how their life has become tougher over the past few months. Ekaterina does not make fresh tea each time she wants a drink. She pours half a cup of a cold, stale brown brew from the large pot, and tops it up with fresh boiled water.

"Everything is expensive," she says, puffing on the single cigarette to which she has rationed herself that evening. "All the prices have gone up at least three times in the past few weeks. It's difficult to buy anything."

She gave up working when Nastia, her daughter, was born three years ago. Now, there is little chance of finding other employment. Her husband Misha had a steady job with a company exporting jam. But in the weeks after the collapse of the rouble last August, he was put on an extended "holiday". Since then, he has scurried along, buying and selling things, running occasional errands.

In some ways, the couple are lucky. Communism - and their parents - left them with the basic essentials of modern urban subsistence living. The flat may hardly be inspiring. It has not been redecorated since the 1970s. It stands in a bland northern suburb of St Petersburg, 15 minutes walk from the last stop on the metro, on the ninth floor of a graffiti-covered block that is all but indistinguishable from its neighbours.

But it costs them next to nothing to rent, and the heating works - even if it is centrally controlled and impossible to regulate. Their parents help out with a little money from time to time. The couple do not express outrage at their condition, just resignation accompanied by periodic bouts of gloom about the future.

In the centre of town, lined with its tastefully renovated historic buildings, the signs of despair are even harder for an outsider to spot at first. True, you can see a world-class opera or ballet for about a pound - but that was always the case. The sign saying "Sorry, we're full of customers. Come back later" sits neglected by the door of one near-empty fur-coat showroom. But there are people on the streets, and food and luxury items in the shops.

The crisis has brought into ever sharper contrast the difference between those who have money and those who do not. Flashy Mercedes driven by "New Russians" speed past with little regard for other cars - or for pedestrians crossing the road. Bodyguards in sunglasses pick up their bosses' daughters from school.

In an exclusive shopping centre on the Nevski Prospekt, men in sharp suits stand by detectors, as much to prevent "undesirables" going in as to intercept potential shop-lifters coming out. Those that they allow to pass have the privilege of seeing expensively-framed photographs decorating the walls, artistically but safely portraying in two dimensions homeless and begging Russians.

An old woman in a bakery carefully counts out her kopeck coins to see if she can just afford a three-rouble bun, as a young man behind her tuts impatiently. Outside, makeshift shoe repair booths do a better business than the adjacent shops selling leather shoes.

In an old apartment just off Nevski Prospekt, "Andrei" and "Natasha" are also getting by. They survive with what they have, living off reserves. They have not bought new clothes in a long time. In the cramped bathroom, with its plastic seat and cracked bowl, is a modest decoration: a picture taken from the 1994 calendar produced by a Chinese import company.

They look back with more than a little nostalgia on the Soviet period, and still call their city Leningrad. He is a professor at a local university, she is a museum curator. With their parents' support, they were able to buy their flat in the early 1990s. "I don't see how we will ever have the money to renovate the apartment," says Natasha.

"Before, no one talked about money. Now they talk about little else." She is constantly

The crisis has drawn an even sharper contrast between those with money and those without

scrutinising prices, leaving shops where she can no longer afford to go. The meals she serves use basic ingredients, but are imaginatively decorated and well presented with herbs and brightly-coloured vegetables. She was able to gather mushrooms in the forest recently when they were given a lift by "new Russian" friends in their car.

Andrei says that he goes to a restaurant perhaps once a year. It pains him to accept an invitation to a ballet, a pastime he adores but has not attended for years "because there is so much suffering, so many people around us without anything". There is a quiet dignity among some of the other Russians in the audience, dressed in old but smart clothes, some presenting a single - but expensive - flower to the performers at the end.

Natasha and Andrei's lifestyle has been gradually declining for far longer than just since August - when their \$40 a month salaries were last paid. The real value of their earnings - and their status - has been dropping ever since the fall of communism. They carry from the period an enormous pride in their city, and a rich knowledge of history and literature from the west as well as the east.

Since then, they have equated Russian-style democracy of the 1990s with corruption. A political acquaintance was murdered recently; and Natasha found a neighbour shot dead outside his apartment.

But they accept their situation with a certain resignation. And they get by. Things have been worse in the past. And they may well be worse again.

Modern Life

## The old ice-cream and jelly routine

Don't fall for it, says Susanne Glass. She got toast when her tonsils came out

They promise you ice-cream and jelly. "Tonsils at your age," they say. "I had mine out when I was five. But it's a nothing of course. Hardly an op at all." That's when they promise the ice-cream and jelly.

This new year, alongside a pledge to get my tax returns in on time and give up chocolate in the morning, the removal of the rotting offenders was my resolution. It has been my new year's resolution since 1993.

"A decade," said the ear, nose and throat man last December looking up his notes. I did almost brave it in January 1991. I checked myself into hospital and 30 minutes later at the sight of the white paper knickers they make you wear for surgery I checked myself out.

The surgeon forgave me, even greeted me with a smile on the 35 occasions I visited him complaining between then and now. He said: "It's the tonsils. . . they really ought to go. You'll be sore afterwards, but we'll make a new woman of you. Why don't you go along to my secretary's room and

book a date?" And I would say: "Yes, I'll do just that." Then I would slink past the secretary's door and escape on to Harley Street until the next charade.

Every year for me was the Year of the Tonsils. I pledged and I promised through bouts of tonsillitis to have them removed. My friends ceased to believe me. They said I had a crush on the ear, nose and throat man and wanted to keep going back. In my car mirror I examined them. I was stopped by a policeman for loitering and forced to explain. "They'll give you ice-cream and jelly," he said.

What they actually give you is crisps and toast. I know because I did it. On New Year's eve I lent it to a friend I might. He said: "I'd bet my entire fortune

that you won't." We had \$100 on it.

I called another friend. A doctor. I asked if he thought I should do it. He said Yes. I asked why. He said: "You're in a rut. You have to change the record. We all have to change the record from time to time."

At 5pm on January 4 I called the surgeon's secretary and said: "I don't suppose he could whip them out tomorrow?" She said: "I'll call the hospital. I'll check if there's a bed." I hoped there wouldn't be. There was.

She said: "Be there at 7.30 in the morning, unless of course you change your mind." That night I dreamt of vanilla fudge ice-cream. It tasted off.

We have these random ways of checking if our decisions are the

right ones. I stepped out of my house in the early morning half-light. There was an empty taxi passing my front door. This was meant to be.

One sight of the white paper knickers and I checked myself out

They prepared me for surgery. The paper knickers again. That green gown with the slit at the back. A pair of foam slippers. The sister said: "I hear you ran away

last time. Can we offer you a little something to calm the nerves?" I declined. I didn't want to lose control.

They left me alone - until later when they knocked and called my name. I walked down the stairs to the theatre. Everything was green and silver. Above his mask the surgeon's eyes smiled. He held out his arms. "We've got you at last."

I hoisted myself up on to the slab. I didn't even notice the woman to my left until the surgeon said: "Tell the anaesthetist the story of your novel." My ego kicked in even then. Someone was prepared to listen. I got to the first strand of the plot. The darkness rose and I was gone.

I was resurrected and the after-

math crept up on me. No soreness this, but a soaring. Red hot pokers of agony down the throat.

They don't tell you about tonsils as a grown-up like they don't tell you about labour. You can't speak but you can groan. You scribble notes and gesticulate. You taste the trauma of life without a voice. They inject you and you fly. They send you home with bags of potent Smarties to cut the pain. They tell you to eat toast and crisps and chew gum.

But I regress. I ask for the ice-cream. My mother cuts the toast into tiny squares. I turn my head away. My father walks into the room. He says: "You have to drink." He doesn't know what it feels like. He had his tonsils out at six, not 36. The opium in the drugs takes over. Anything is

allowed. At three in the morning I pour the glass of water over my father's head.

I lie there for 10 days and 10 nights. They melt into one another. On the 10th day my interest in the world is reawakened by a jar in a plastic bag on my bedside table. My new year's resolutions, my demons in a jar. My tonsils in formaldehyde. It's the end of January and many of our demons are out, our new year's resolutions accomplished, floating in jars of formaldehyde. Catharsis is often painful. Mine was no exception.

As the surgeon prophesied I have begun to feel the new woman in me emerging through the mist. And if, after a decade of deliberation, I was still unprepared for the price of shedding my old skin, that was my own fault for believing even a little in the myth of ice-cream and jelly.

Chess No 1270: 1 Pg2, 2 Bg2, 3 Qg2 and 3 Qg7, 3 Qg8 or 3 Qg5, 4 P1d2, 5 Qg4, 6 Qg5, 7 Qg6, 8 Qg7, 9 Qg8, 10 Qg9, 11 Qg10, 12 Qg11, 13 Qg12, 14 Qg13, 15 Qg14, 16 Qg15, 17 Qg16, 18 Qg17, 19 Qg18, 20 Qg19, 21 Qg20, 22 Qg21, 23 Qg22, 24 Qg23, 25 Qg24, 26 Qg25, 27 Qg26, 28 Qg27, 29 Qg28, 30 Qg29, 31 Qg30, 32 Qg31, 33 Qg32, 34 Qg33, 35 Qg34, 36 Qg35, 37 Qg36, 38 Qg37, 39 Qg38, 40 Qg39, 41 Qg40, 42 Qg41, 43 Qg42, 44 Qg43, 45 Qg44, 46 Qg45, 47 Qg46, 48 Qg47, 49 Qg48, 50 Qg49, 51 Qg50, 52 Qg51, 53 Qg52, 54 Qg53, 55 Qg54, 56 Qg55, 57 Qg56, 58 Qg57, 59 Qg58, 60 Qg59, 61 Qg60, 62 Qg61, 63 Qg62, 64 Qg63, 65 Qg64, 66 Qg65, 67 Qg66, 68 Qg67, 69 Qg68, 70 Qg69, 71 Qg70, 72 Qg71, 73 Qg72, 74 Qg73, 75 Qg74, 76 Qg75, 77 Qg76, 78 Qg77, 79 Qg78, 80 Qg79, 81 Qg80, 82 Qg81, 83 Qg82, 84 Qg83, 85 Qg84, 86 Qg85, 87 Qg86, 88 Qg87, 89 Qg88, 90 Qg89, 91 Qg90, 92 Qg91, 93 Qg92, 94 Qg93, 95 Qg94, 96 Qg95, 97 Qg96, 98 Qg97, 99 Qg98, 100 Qg99, 101 Qg100, 102 Qg101, 103 Qg102, 104 Qg103, 105 Qg104, 106 Qg105, 107 Qg106, 108 Qg107, 109 Qg108, 110 Qg109, 111 Qg110, 112 Qg111, 113 Qg112, 114 Qg113, 115 Qg114, 116 Qg115, 117 Qg116, 118 Qg117, 119 Qg118, 120 Qg119, 121 Qg120, 122 Qg121, 123 Qg122, 124 Qg123, 125 Qg124, 126 Qg125, 127 Qg126, 128 Qg127, 129 Qg128, 130 Qg129, 131 Qg130, 132 Qg131, 133 Qg132, 134 Qg133, 135 Qg134, 136 Qg135, 137 Qg136, 138 Qg137, 139 Qg138, 140 Qg139, 141 Qg140, 142 Qg141, 143 Qg142, 144 Qg143, 145 Qg144, 146 Qg145, 147 Qg146, 148 Qg147, 149 Qg148, 150 Qg149, 151 Qg150, 152 Qg151, 153 Qg152, 154 Qg153, 155 Qg154, 156 Qg155, 157 Qg156, 158 Qg157, 159 Qg158, 160 Qg159, 161 Qg160, 162 Qg161, 163 Qg162, 164 Qg163, 165 Qg164, 166 Qg165, 167 Qg166, 168 Qg167, 169 Qg168, 170 Qg169, 171 Qg170, 172 Qg171, 173 Qg172, 174 Qg173, 175 Qg174, 176 Qg175, 177 Qg176, 178 Qg177, 179 Qg178, 180 Qg179, 181 Qg180, 182 Qg181, 183 Qg182, 184 Qg183, 185 Qg184, 186 Qg185, 187 Qg186, 188 Qg187, 189 Qg188, 190 Qg189, 191 Qg190, 192 Qg191, 193 Qg192, 194 Qg193, 195 Qg194, 196 Qg195, 197 Qg196, 198 Qg197, 199 Qg198, 200 Qg199, 201 Qg200, 202 Qg201, 203 Qg202, 204 Qg203, 205 Qg204, 206 Qg205, 207 Qg206, 208 Qg207, 209 Qg208, 210 Qg209, 211 Qg210, 212 Qg211, 213 Qg212, 214 Qg213, 215 Qg214, 216 Qg215, 217 Qg216, 218 Qg217, 219 Qg218, 220 Qg219, 221 Qg220, 222 Qg221, 223 Qg222, 224 Qg223, 225 Qg224, 226 Qg225, 227 Qg226, 228 Qg227, 229 Qg228, 230 Qg229, 231 Qg230, 232 Qg231, 233 Qg232, 234 Qg233, 235 Qg234, 236 Qg235, 237 Qg236, 238 Qg237, 239 Qg238, 240 Qg239, 241 Qg240, 242 Qg241, 243 Qg242, 244 Qg243, 245 Qg244, 246 Qg245, 247 Qg246, 248 Qg247, 249 Qg248, 250 Qg249, 251 Qg250, 252 Qg251, 253 Qg252, 254 Qg253, 255 Qg254, 256 Qg255, 257 Qg256, 258 Qg257, 259 Qg258, 260 Qg259, 261 Qg260, 262 Qg261, 263 Qg262, 264 Qg263, 265 Qg264, 266 Qg265, 267 Qg266, 268 Qg267, 269 Qg268, 270 Qg269, 271 Qg270, 272 Qg271, 273 Qg272, 274 Qg273, 275 Qg274, 276 Qg275, 277 Qg276, 278 Qg277, 279 Qg278, 280 Qg279, 281 Qg280, 282 Qg281, 283 Qg282, 284 Qg283, 285 Qg284, 286 Qg285, 287 Qg286, 288 Qg287, 289 Qg288, 290 Qg289, 291 Qg290, 292 Qg291, 293 Qg292, 294 Qg293, 295 Qg294, 296 Qg295, 297 Qg296, 298 Qg297, 299 Qg298, 300 Qg299, 301 Qg300, 302 Qg301, 303 Qg302, 304 Qg303, 305 Qg304, 306 Qg305, 307 Qg306, 308 Qg307, 309 Qg308, 310 Qg309, 311 Qg310, 312 Qg311, 313 Qg312, 314 Qg313, 315 Qg314, 316 Qg315, 317 Qg316, 318 Qg317, 319 Qg318, 320 Qg319, 321 Qg320, 322 Qg321, 323 Qg322, 324 Qg323, 325 Qg324, 326 Qg325, 327 Qg326, 328 Qg327, 329 Qg328, 330 Qg329, 331 Qg330, 332 Qg331, 333 Qg332, 334 Qg333, 335 Qg334, 336 Qg335, 337 Qg336, 338 Qg337, 339 Qg338, 340 Qg339, 341 Qg340, 342 Qg341, 343 Qg342, 344 Qg343, 345 Qg344, 346 Qg345, 347 Qg346, 348 Qg347, 349 Qg348, 350 Qg349, 351 Qg350, 352 Qg351, 353 Qg352, 354 Qg353, 355 Qg354, 356 Qg355, 357 Qg356, 358 Qg357, 359 Qg358, 360 Qg359, 361 Qg360, 362 Qg361, 363 Qg362, 364 Qg363, 365 Qg364, 366 Qg365, 367 Qg366, 368 Qg367, 369 Qg368, 370 Qg369, 371 Qg370, 372 Qg371, 373 Qg372, 374 Qg373, 375 Qg374, 376 Qg375, 377 Qg376, 378 Qg377, 379 Qg378, 380 Qg379, 381 Qg380, 382 Qg381, 383 Qg382, 384 Qg383, 385 Qg384, 386 Qg385, 387 Qg386, 388 Qg387, 389 Qg388, 390 Qg389, 391 Qg390, 392 Qg391, 393 Qg392, 394 Qg393, 395 Qg394, 396 Qg395, 397 Qg396, 398 Qg397, 399 Qg398, 400 Qg399, 401 Qg400, 402 Qg401, 403 Qg402, 404 Qg403, 405 Qg404, 406 Qg405, 407 Qg406, 408 Qg407, 409 Qg408, 410 Qg409, 411 Qg410, 412 Qg411, 413 Qg412, 414 Qg413, 415 Qg414, 416 Qg415, 417 Qg416, 418 Qg417, 419 Qg418, 420 Qg419, 421 Qg420, 422 Qg421, 423 Qg422, 424 Qg423, 425 Qg424, 426 Qg425, 427 Qg426, 428 Qg427, 429 Qg428, 430 Qg429, 431 Qg430, 432 Qg431, 433 Qg432, 434 Qg433, 435 Qg434, 436 Qg435, 437 Qg436, 438 Qg437, 439 Qg438, 440 Qg439, 441 Qg440, 442 Qg441, 443 Qg442, 444 Qg443, 445 Qg444, 446 Qg445, 447 Qg446, 448 Qg447, 449 Qg448, 450 Qg449, 451 Qg450, 452 Qg451, 453 Qg452, 454 Qg453, 455 Qg454, 456 Qg455, 457 Qg456, 458 Qg457, 459 Qg458, 460 Qg459, 461 Qg460, 462 Qg461, 463 Qg462, 464 Qg463, 465 Qg464, 466 Qg465, 467 Qg466, 468 Qg467, 469 Qg468, 470 Qg469, 471 Qg470, 472 Qg471, 473 Qg472, 474 Qg473, 475 Qg474, 476 Qg475, 477 Qg476, 478 Qg477, 479 Qg478, 480 Qg479, 481 Qg480, 482 Qg481, 483 Qg482, 484 Qg483, 485 Qg484, 486 Qg485, 487 Qg486, 488 Qg487, 489 Qg488, 490 Qg489, 491 Qg490, 492 Qg491, 493 Qg492, 494 Qg493, 495 Qg494, 496 Qg495, 497 Qg496, 498 Qg497, 499 Qg498, 500 Qg499, 501 Qg500, 502 Qg501, 503 Qg502, 504 Qg503, 505 Qg504, 506 Qg505, 507 Qg506, 508 Qg507, 509 Qg508, 510 Qg509, 511 Qg510, 512 Qg511, 513 Qg512, 514 Qg513, 515 Qg514, 516 Qg515, 517 Qg516, 518 Qg517, 519 Qg518, 520 Qg519, 521 Qg520, 522 Qg521, 523 Qg522, 524 Qg523, 525 Qg524, 526 Qg525, 527 Qg526, 528 Qg527, 529 Qg528, 530 Qg